



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School & Nursery

Educational Visits Policy

Our family at St Joseph's Learns, Loves and grows with God at the centre

Reviewed and ratified by Governing body	27 th November 2025
Next Revision (Please highlight as appropriate)	Annually
To be reviewed	November 2026

Background

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes St Joseph's Catholic Primary School a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects.
- Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts. ie. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School:

- 1 Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
- 2 Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info (as recommended by the LA).
- 3 Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this school policy, Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- 1 Visits/activities within walking distance that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.

These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.

2 Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. Eg. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.

These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.

3 Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.

These follow 2. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Louise Palmer who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Head. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head of School has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. They are available to offer support, constructive advice, a sounding board for ideas, a second opinion on proposals and help where needed. They may also ask questions and seek information to arrive at the best solution. Individual governors may be given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Head Teacher will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous relevant training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Emergency procedures

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 1). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority.

Educational Visits Checklist

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'.

Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket permission /consent at the start of each year for certain routine activities, which are within walking distance in the local area, during the school day (8:55am-3:15pm), for example, environmental studies, libraries, shops, parks, swimming, sporting fixtures, and joint activities with other schools.

Specific (ie. one-off), parental permission /consent will be sought for any out-of-school activities beyond those outlined above and which could involve commitment to extended journeys or times, expense or adventure activities. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. Parents have the option of consenting online via Parentpay or through a traditional paper consent form.

Inclusion

Activities must be available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs or protected characteristics (disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex; sexual orientation). When a visit or activity is being planned, all reasonably practicable measures must be taken to include all young people. Every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved:

- an entitlement to participate.
- accessibility through adaptation or modification, including the provision of auxiliary aids and services.
- integration through participation with peers.
- care should be taken not to arrange a residential visit during a religious festival or holiday might prevent pupils of certain religions being able to attend.

In making decisions, if it is genuinely impossible to find a suitable way of including everyone and if a young person is excluded from a visit or activity, even for good reasons, the impact of this – such as on attitudes and relationships across a school – must be considered, and consideration given to the provision of a suitable alternative. Any adjustments that are made in order to include a disabled young person should not impinge

unduly on the planned purpose of the activity. As an example, it may not be appropriate for a parent to accompany a child on a residential visit where the planned learning outcomes of the visit include "developing independence" and "developing relationships".

A decision to exclude a young person will be made only after consultation with those who have responsibility for the young person, including (as appropriate) the head teacher/manager, visit leader, class teacher, parents, any support staff, any third party provider, and possibly their GP.

It may be reasonable to exclude a young person where their behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety and welfare of either themselves, or other members of the group, or the leaders. The Equality Act protects people from discrimination and harassment based on the 'protected characteristics'. Where a young person has a behaviour difficulty that is not associated with a protected characteristic then it is unlikely that the Equality Act applies. When a young person is excluded on these grounds, the School will consider providing alternative ways of achieving the same learning outcomes. Where there is some doubt about including or excluding a young person on the grounds of their behaviour, the following points will be considered:

- identifying the issue at the earliest stage of planning.
- involving all interested parties.
- establishing a behaviour management plan with agreed action points that may enable inclusion on the visit.
- establishing behaviour targets and timescales to be met to allow inclusion, or trigger a decision to exclude.
- providing an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues.
- ensuring that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence.
- recording this process.

Charging / funding for visits

Fees are NOT required for trips, however a voluntary contribution is requested, therefore it is important to provide detailed written information to Parents. This should explain the nature of the proposed activity or visit, the likely value in educational terms and the financial contribution per student which would be required if the activity were to take place. If the contribution proves to be too difficult for parents /carers financially, they can speak in confidence to a member of the Senior Leadership Team to arrange a payment plan. Please note if there are insufficient contributions then trips may have to be cancelled. There is no limit to the level of voluntary contribution, nor is there any restriction on the way in which such contributions may be used. Thus voluntary contributions may be used to subsidise students of lesser means and to pay the travel and accommodation costs of accompanying teachers.

Transport

Use of staff cars to transport pupils

Transporting children in private cars is not to be considered in most circumstances. However if it is deemed necessary and agreement has been obtained from the Head of School at a minimum, records must address the following:

- Seeking evidence that the vehicle is roadworthy. e.g. MOT certificate where relevant.
- Seeking evidence that the driver holds an appropriate and valid licence.

- Seeking evidence that there is a valid insurance policy covering the intended use. This requires that employees have "business use" cover.
- Ensuring that there is explicit parental consent to transport pupils in private cars and by specified persons.
- Ensuring that drivers properly understand their duty of care in this situation.

Insurance

Provided the visit has been added to EVOLVE and approved. St Joseph's is insured under the Council's central insurance arrangements, so it is not necessary to submit separate information to the Council,

Other topics

Ratios

Ratios are a risk management issue, and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/student ratios for a particular age group or activity. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework* no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be lower than the legal minimum that applies otherwise (either 1:8 or 1:13 in early years settings and 1:30 in infant classes in maintained schools).

It is not unusual for a ratio of 1:1 to be necessary.

However as a starting point for consideration rather than being definitive and where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements the DfES publication HASPEV (1998) suggested the following "starting points":

- School years 1 - 3, 1:6
- School years 4 - 6, 1:10/15

Without special safeguards or control measures, these ratios will **not** be adequate to meet the needs of most residential or more complex visits.

A useful framework for assessing requirements for ratios and effective supervision is SAGED:

- Staffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- Activity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- Group characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- Environmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

Swimming Lessons

The Department of Education includes swimming and water safety in the revised national curriculum for schools in England and states that all schools must provide swimming provision in Key Stage 1 or 2.

To support the swimming lessons we use GLL, Better Schools Swimming to enable pupils to acquire basic swimming skills while they are at St. Joseph's Primary School. Each pupil in year 3 will attend a weekly session in a swimming pool annually and the lesson is of one hour's duration and comprises both water play and instruction.

The swimming pool currently used for lessons is Archway Swimming Pool run by GLL leisure. Parents / carers will receive a standard letter providing information on school swimming before their child starts their swimming term. In the best interest of the child it is the duty of parents / guardians to inform the class teacher and/ or Principal with regard to any health condition that may affect the child in the pool. It is the policy of this school that all pupils attend swimming lessons, unless exempted by a doctor.

Health and Safety issues:

The children walk to and from the swimming pool with their teacher and one other supervising adult. They are supervised at all times. Pupils are required to behave at all times in a manner that ensures the safety of all involved, while walking, crossing at traffic lights, in the changing rooms and while swimming.

The Health and Safety and Behaviour Guidelines outlined by the pool authorities will be strictly adhered to. Best practice in relation to the supervision, instruction and child protection procedures as outlined by the ASA will be adhered to at all times.

Dismissal of pupils after evening activities

No child will be permitted to go home unaccompanied following evening trips /events or those which finish later than normal school hours of 3:15pm

Appendix 1 – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

- 1 There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
- 2 This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
- 3 For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
- 4 For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
- 5 The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
 - The visit leader will carry an LA Emergency 'Card'
 - This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.

Parent /Carer Volunteers

There is a separate policy for volunteers (Policy for Volunteers & Visitors) which should be read in conjunction with this policy. For many of our trips the visit leader will ask parents or carers if they are able to assist on trips, however all volunteers **should be supervised** and so will not be engaging in regulated activity. Schools are not allowed to check supervised volunteers against the barred list and there is no duty for an Enhanced DBS check to be obtained for them, although schools may choose to request one as they judge necessary. All volunteers must be given a visit /trip overview and relevant information about the day. They must also complete the Volunteer Helper Agreement.