

Community Visits Policy 2024 - 2025



Philosophy and Purpose

This policy aims to create a framework which will apply to all community visits throughout school. Because community visits are very varied in their intent, implementation, venues, and duration, this policy can only reflect guidelines for good practice. The 'LCC Educational Off Sites Visits Policy and Guidelines' should be read and followed in conjunction with this policy. The merits and impact of each visit will have to be considered by the staff involved and the intended group who will benefit.

Rationale

Community visits make a vital contribution to the education of our pupils they can:

- **reinforce the wider curriculum;**
- **extend and apply particular skills within society;**
- **help pupils to improve their resilience;**
- **enable social inclusion to take place;**
- **reward consistent work;**
- **give first hand experience of places, people sights and sounds;**
- **extend the sensory curriculum.**
- **Support independence and life skills programmes**

We need also to be mindful that while we are in the community we are potentially in a more challenging situation - it can also highlight how vulnerable even our most able pupils are. **These challenges may come from the environment, for example the weather, the access limitations and traffic. They may also come from the community itself in that the public is not always as predictable and positive as we would wish.**

Some questions that would need to be considered for every community visit:

1. Is the venue appropriate for the intended group given the prevailing weather conditions/abilities of the group?
2. Can the educational intent and targets be met most effectively through the visit?
3. Is the focus of the visit keyed into the long term planning and intent of the curriculum area?

4. If the visit is supporting another area of the curriculum (e.g. shop visit to support food technology) is it the most productive use of quality teaching time?
5. If circumstances change as a result of factors beyond your control have you got an alternative venue/strategy? (Plan B)
6. Is the time scale available adequate to meet all the planned outcomes of the visit?

Procedure

- Each community visit will need to be planned in advance and must be risk assessed, using a Form 5 and in the school diary at least the week before the trip occurs. It must be ascertained whether the trip is a Type A visit or a Type B visit in order to complete the appropriate paperwork and to ensure that the correct authorisation is granted - please see appendix 1 for more details.
- A leader and deputy leader, with suitable experience, qualifications, and knowledge of the children, should be assigned with clearly defined roles.
- Any accompanying adults should be carefully considered and be included in the risk assessment. Appropriate DBS checks must be undertaken in respect of accompanying adults, and if this is not done, arrangements must be made to ensure that there is no possibility of that person having unsupervised contact. Accompanying adults/Volunteers should not be left in sole charge of any group of pupils.
- The visit leader and accompanying school staff should have a good working knowledge of first aid, and an appropriately stocked first aid kit should be taken. Type B visits require a suitably qualified first aider.
- **Type A visits** must be put onto the school calendar at least a week prior to the visit. They must also be put onto the Lancashire County Council EVOLVE platform at least the prior to a visit, so that the school educational visits coordinator (EVC) can check and authorise the visit.
- Type B visits (outdoor and adventurous activities) must be put onto the school calendar and the Lancashire County Council EVOLVE platform at least 4 weeks prior to a visit and must be authorised by the Lancashire Educational Visits Team.
- EVOLVE usernames and passwords are given out by the school EVC, who can also give advice on how to use the system and how to plan and risk assess visits.

- Make relevant inquiries and approximate costs involved. Requests for parental contributions for admission costs can be made on a voluntary basis, if appropriate. However, if the visit is to meet educational needs, then no pupil can be excluded on financial grounds alone. It can be suggested that if insufficient contributions are met the whole trip may be in jeopardy.
- Discuss with EVC, subject leaders, head teacher or deputy head teacher if unsure about any aspect of the visit.
- Ensure that staff: pupil ratios are appropriate for the group. This can be very different depending on the pupils involved and their individual needs. Requests for additional or alternative staff to assist with the visit, e.g. for driving or if lunchtime arrangements will be affected then the deputy head teacher will need to be informed at the outset.
- Venues and community visits must be fully risk assessed using Form 5. Pre-visits to venues and activities should be carried out if they are new to the cohort, and regular checks of places that are often visited should also take place, as risks can change quickly. The risk assessment should be shared with all adults on the trip, and explained in child-friendly language to pupils. A copy should be stored electronically in the 'Trips' folder in the shared area of the school network.
- Send out letter seeking permission for and confirming details (times, activities, etc.) of visit, including a date to return payment if applicable. Regular curriculum trips (e.g. weekly visits to the local shop) can be covered with a single letter/permission slip which is refreshed yearly. Reply slips should be stored electronically in the 'Trips' folder in the shared area of the school network.
- Order lunch from kitchen two weeks in advance. Remember to cancel these if the trip is called-off.
- Pupils will need to be signed out, and then on return, signed back in, on the Enentry electronic system by a member of staff. Staff should sign **themselves** in and out of school. All participants should be marked as being out on a 'school activity'.
- A head count must be done before leaving the venue and when getting on and off transport and at regular points during the visit. Any emergency medication - e.g. rescue medication, inhalers, etc. should be carried in a yellow bag for rescue meds /suitable bag for meds and carried by a designated member of staff. Photographs of pupils and medical details (care plans) should be carried by a member of staff.

- If you become delayed for reasons beyond your control contact school (don't forget a mobile phone), information will be organised and messages for parents will be sent, e.g. if the pupils are likely to be late home, or if alternative meal arrangements are required if lunchtime is affected.
- In the event of an emergency where parents need to be contacted, the party leader must phone the base contact in school who will make the relevant contact.
- In the event of an emergency or critical incident, staff should follow the Visit Leader Emergency Action Card that should be taken on the trip. Staff should not speak to the press. Any media requests should be directed to the LCC Corporate Communications Team.
- A note is made on the community visit form of any risk individuals may cause, e.g. behaviour, epilepsy, etc.
- A Plan B must be included on EVOLVE, and if an alternative venue/activity for the visit is used or the circumstances altered, this plan must be backed-up by a full risk assessment.
- The head teacher/deputy head teacher will inform governors of data for visits out of school.

Transport

All pupils use transport with seat belts and all seat belts are worn at all times. Staff who use their own cars must ensure that their vehicle is roadworthy and they have the appropriate insurance cover. Special permission must be sought from parents/carers for any pupils who are travelling in staff cars. A mileage allowance can be claimed by logging on to Lancashire Oracle for staff who use their own cars for school business.

If the school minibus is used, the driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. He/She should have a clean and valid driving licence and the MIDAS qualification, and must not drive when taking medication or undergoing treatment that might affect their judgement or ability. The law on driver licensing no longer allows car drivers who passed their test after January 1997 to drive minibuses without passing a PSV driving test so that they have a D1 on their licence. Mileage and vehicle checks need to be carried out and logged by the driver before setting off, and the mileage recorded on return to school. Any problems or issues should be noted, and the EVC/SMT/site supervisor should be informed straight away, as appropriate. If the minibus breaks down, a recovery service number is displayed on

the driver of each bus. Base contact at school should also be informed if there is an instance of breakdown.

Pupils Excluded from Visits

The whole nature of what we do at Acorns is inclusive, but there may be certain opportunities that are more specific and targeted for certain pupils, and where a particular community visit would be of benefit to them. An example of this could be more able pupils attending a 'Changing Horizons' careers fair, or a PMLD pupil having regular visits to a sensory activity centre. Pupils could be excluded from a visit for a number of specific reasons, for example, the venue may be unsuitable, there is not adequate wheelchair access, or the visit is designed to meet very specific individual learning outcomes. The individual pupil may be too fragile because of their current health situation. We must be consistent in our approach to the exclusion of pupils from a visit. If the answers to points 1-4 above are all positive, then which particular circumstances exclude the pupil?

Monitoring and Reviewing

- All learning outcomes from the educational visit must be recorded on the community visits form to show the intended intent.
- A Plan B must be included on the community visits form, and if an alternative venue/activity for the visit is used or the circumstances altered, this plan must be backed-up by a risk assessment.
- If a pupil was excluded from a visit on short-term health grounds this should be recorded on the community visits form with the alternative provision.
- If a venue is found to be not as advertised or access is not as adequate as you have been led to believe through brochures etc., let head teacher/deputy head teacher/EVC know so that appropriate steps can be taken.
- For ALL visits, on return to school, the lead member of staff should revisit the visits form on Evolve to record if there have been any incidents, accidents, or near-misses. This also needs to be logged on the EVOLVE platform.

- If there have been any incidents, accidents or near-misses, the EVC/head teacher/deputy head teacher should be informed immediately, and any necessary action must be taken, for example, phone calls, recording of details, and notification for the authority.
- Any paperwork with staff and pupils' details should be returned to the trip leader to be shredded, in line with GDPR regulations. Copies of reply slips, risk assessments and other trip paperwork should be stored electronically in the 'Trips' folder in the shared area of the school's network.

Residential Visits

The following section of the policy needs to be applied for residential trips, **in addition to** the protocols from the non-residential policy.

Philosophy and Purpose

When planning residential visits that will involve pupils staying overnight at a particular venue the head teacher must inform the governing body at a full governing body meeting. These occur on a termly basis, therefore, to deliver a residential visit for example in the Autumn Term, the initial request to the governors must be made by the preceding Spring meeting.

The following information (if appropriate) will be needed by the governing body before the final permission will be granted:

- The dates and duration of the residential;
- An outline of the reasons and aims (intent) of the residential and the pupils to be invited to attend;
- All adults involved with the residential should be listed on the initial request to the governing body, and if required a request for DBS clearance with substantial access to children may be sought;
- The total cost of the residential and how the money will be raised with an indication of percentage contribution from families. Dates of when the deposits or interim payments are to be made and the amounts required;
- A note of all applications for funding from charities;

- The details of the venue in the form of H&S issues e.g. fire detection, wheelchair access, and staffing;
- Completion of a risk assessment for all activities, the residential venue, transport, pupils, staff, and others.

Any residential visits must gain authorisation from the Lancashire County Council Education Visits team, with the details of the visit having been submitted on the EVOLVE website as a Type B visit (outdoor and adventurous) at least four weeks prior to the visit taking place. Permission should be sought from parents/carers must be informed of key information relating to the trip, including activities taking place, details of accommodation, emergency contact numbers, etc. A trip planning checklist, available on EVOLVE, should be used to ensure that all bases have been covered.

NB:

- If using an independent travel company, the protection associations are they affiliated to should be ascertained e.g. Abta
- Insurance cover for the residential indicating that the policy is appropriate for the intended group.
- If specific activities are being planned the qualifications of staff that will be leading those activities should be established.
- Major changes in venue, cost of staff, etc. should be notified to the EVC and head teacher or deputy head teacher as soon as possible.

October 2024

To be reviewed by the EVC in September each academic year.

Appendix 1

Types of Visit (Taken from LCC Educational Off Site Visits Policy and Guidelines 2022- 2024)

Type 'A' Visits (approval by the school/service)

Educational low risk off-site visits, up to one-day duration, for example:

- Theatre visits
- Most field study visits
- Museum visits.

Type 'B' Visits (require approval by the County Council) Educational/Off Site Visits:

• Involving a planned activity on water, or in which the presence of water is identified as a hazard on the risk assessment*. Travel on a ferry is regarded as a form of public transport and is therefore not necessarily a hazard

• Involving adventurous activities**

• To farms

• To theme parks

• To trampoline parks and non-curriculum one off sessions

• Involving overnight stay or residential accommodation or overseas visits including foreign exchange visits

• London day visits and other multi venue city visits

* If the visit involves swimming as a planned activity, please refer to Appendix 9

** The following are examples (not an exhaustive list of such activities) • Paddle sports; canoeing, kayaking, stand up paddle boarding

• Mountain sports; climbing, hillwalking, scrambling, gorge walks, 'river' walks

• Caving; including show caves/ tourist mines

• Motorsports; karting, MX riding, quad biking, BMX riding

• Artificial climbing structures; walls, high/ low ropes • Snow sports; skiing, boarding

• Water sports; sailing, power boating, SCUBA diving, kite surfing, wild swimming

• Horse riding

• Ice skating

• Archery

• Activities with armed forces