



Willow Primary School

Visits Policy

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Context

Willow Primary School believes 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 Willow 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. i.e. 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, Willow Primary School:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: 'Educational Off-site Visits and Adventurous Activities Guidance' with reference to OEAP National Guidance.
2. Uses 'Exeant', 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 school policy (i.e. this document), DMBC policy and guidance, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of visit

There are three types of visit:

1. Routine local visits in the [can be covered by an 'Extended Learning Locality Statement' (See Appendix A)] – Cat. A
2. Day visits within the UK (outside of London) that do not involve an adventurous activity – Cat. B
3. Visits to London, and/or that are overseas, and/or residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity, and/or take place in a challenging environment- Cat. C

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on 'Exeant' (where required). Using the 'Exeant' system, they are to obtain initial approval for a visit from the EVC (*and/or Head Teacher*) prior to formally planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Mike Parkinson, 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. Initial approval requests for visits will go through to the EVC via the 'Exeant' system. At the point of initial approval the decision is made by the EVC as to whether the visit requires the approval of the Head. The EVC is the main point of contact between the LA and the establishment with specific reference to the 'Exeant' system and is responsible for the management of the 'Exeant' system with regards granting access to the system for establishment staff.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising category C visits after the EVC has looked at it.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via 'Exeant') of all visits that are either overseas, residential, take place in a challenging environment (including London) and/or involve an adventurous activity for Local Authority maintained establishments. For establishments outside of Local Authority control, the LA acts in an advisory and consultative role providing guidance for such establishments.

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 EVC and 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.

Approval

The approval process is as follows for each type of visit: **(See information below and timeline)**

1. **Category 'A' - Local visits which involve transport purely by foot within the locality.** They are to be entered onto the 'Exeant' system. The visit leader must apply for initial approval **two weeks** before the visit. The completed risk assessment must be done **one week** before the visit so the EVC can formally approve it.
2. **Category 'B' - Day visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity, are not within London and do not take place in a challenging environment.** These are entered onto 'Exeant' for initial approval by the EVC **four weeks** before the visit. The completed risk assessment must be completed **two weeks** before the visit so the EVC can formally approve it. Visits **will not** be given formal approval if the risk assessment doesn't state the names of the staff/adults required for it.

- 3. Category 'C' - Visits that are overseas, residential, within London, take place in a challenging environment and/or involve an adventurous activity** are checked by the EVC, approved by the Head along with automatically being sent through to the LA for approval or consultative guidance. These are entered onto 'Exeant' for initial approval by the EVC **six weeks** before the visit. The completed risk assessment must be completed **four weeks** before the visit so the EVC can formally approve it and send it onto the Head teacher and local authority. Again visits **will not** be given formal approval if the risk assessment doesn't state the names of the staff/adults required for it.

Applying for Approval Procedure

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 B). 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

Willow Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. 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 consent at the start of each year for regular/routine activities that take place wholly within the 'normal' school day. Category A visits are covered by using the 'Extended Learning Locality Statement' (Appendix A) and parents/carers can be informed of visits via electronic means, newsletters or letter. For Category B visits that are less routine, parents/carers must be fully informed of the arrangements and acknowledgement received from parent/carers that they have received the information regarding the visit via a reply slip.

Specific, (i.e. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all visits that take place either partly or wholly outside of 'normal' school hours. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

Inclusion

The school fully complies with the Equality Act 2010. Disadvantaged pupils have the opportunity to have educational trips subsidised as money has been allocated from the pupil Premium funding.

Insurance

The school uses the 'Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA)' which is a voluntary arrangement for academies and free schools. It is an alternative insurance through which the cost of risks that materialise will be covered by government funds.

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Swimming Lessons

Children will travel to swimming lessons on a hired coach. A risk assessment will be completed on Exeant. Children will be supervised by two adults when going. The venue will provide the main swimming instructor and a qualified life guard.

Dismissal of pupils following after school sports fixtures

Before the visit the leader will find out who will be picking the child up from the sports fixture (via a letter being sent out before the event). After the event has finished the leader will gather the children together and will only release the child if the parent collects them.

Operating Procedure for Extended Learning Locality

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our extended locality:

- Road traffic.
- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

Outdoor Learning and Off-Site Visits during the Pandemic

At Willow Primary we believe that learning outdoors has many educational and health benefits. During the pandemic, it also provides opportunities for 'social distancing' and fresh air, and so it is important to maximise the amount of time that children and young people spend outdoors.

In addition to using our own playgrounds and gardens, we use areas adjacent to and nearby the school for educational activities i.e. the library. For this, we will negotiate temporary exclusive use of the area close to an establishment, with the landowner. We will use our judgement, informed by government guidance about protective measures and safe working during the pandemic, to decide what is appropriate in particular circumstances. In making this decision, we will consider the 'SAGE' variables (Staff, Activity, Group, Environment).

Planning and Managing Activities during the Pandemic

When planning an activity that is in an area open to the public, the staff will consider carefully how to ensure that their group/bubble is isolated from the public. The same attention will be given to hygiene when outdoors as when indoors.

For example:

- Regularly washing/sanitising hands including when going outside, before and after touching shared objects such as activity equipment, before eating, after using the toilet, when getting on or off transport such as a minibus, when returning inside;
- Avoiding touching objects shared by the public – for example, a member of staff could hold a gate open to avoid everyone touching it;
- Avoiding activities which involve touching each other (e.g. holding hands);
- Sanitising equipment before it is used.

The staff will make easily available, antiseptic hand gel, antiseptic wipes, tissues, bags for waste, gloves and face masks and possibly disposable aprons and eye protection, in case staff need to administer first aid or give direct support or personal care to a participant.

Visits

When planning a visit, the staff will take the current government guidance into account as part of the process of risk assessment, and then check it regularly in the days and weeks leading up to the visit, and during a residential visit, and make any changes necessary to their plans.

Any concerns parents may have will be discussed with them and they will be kept informed about the situation and how we plan to mitigate any risks.

If planning a visit to: a museum or gallery, or to attend a public event such as a sporting fixture, or to stay in accommodation such as a hostel or hotel, the staff will discuss the potential effects of COVID-19 with them at the time of booking, and keep in touch with them during the run-up to the visit.

All staff will check that any provider they intend to use has assessed the risk of coronavirus and implemented control measures to prevent infection.

Appendix B – 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 and have 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.
6. The visit leader will carry a 'Visit Leader Emergency Action Plan - VLEAP' and 'Phone Crib Card'
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.