



Offsite and Educational Visits Policy for Trust Schools

Swale Academies Trust believes that every young person has the right to experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning and personal development, regardless of their age, ability, or circumstances.

Every effort should be made to make educational visits accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of need or disability. Teachers should plan for inclusion from the outset, and should make appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' to enable the participation of SEND pupils. Failure to do so contravenes the The Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Proper and full concern for safeguarding and health and safety must be an imperative at every stage.

This policy complies with:

- the guidance set out by the government: [Health and safety on educational visits - GOV.UK](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

It is essential that any person(s) responsible for organising and/or leading off site visits has read the principles of the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off site visits and learning outside the classroom -

[OEAP National Guidance](#)

Kent and East Sussex local authorities provide online educational trips and visits approval monitoring systems for their schools. The Trust expects all schools to use their local system. In Kent this system is called EVOLVE: [EVOLVE - Kent County Council](#)

Kent Schools

KCC has delegated the responsibility for the safe planning and management of educational visits, including adventurous and residential activities, to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school or establishment.

Kent schools **must** follow the **Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Off Site Visits/Educational Visits**.

The Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Offsite Visits/Educational Visits are available to view at –

<https://www.theeducationpeople.org/media/2400/kent-framework-for-safe-practice-ed-visits-v1>.

Insurance

The Trust holds School Journey insurance through Zurich Insurance Group which covers domestic and overseas trips, excluding winter sports and other adventurous activities. Winter sports cover must be arranged separately through a registered tour operator or other appropriately registered organisation. A copy of the insurance certificate should be taken on all overseas visits.

Public Liability Insurance

When a service provider is coming into a school the provider must have £10m liability cover. The requirement for £10m public liability exists for off site visits and suppliers providing specialist services. Offsite visits to public services and places where the risk assessment perceives the risk to be low may have lower public liability insurance which would still be acceptable. It is a requirement for providers of adventurous activities and tour operators to hold £10m public liability insurance.

Dual Insurance

There are potential dangers to having dual or double insurance, this can lead to a more complicated claims process or even invalidate one or both policies. Be aware that some providers will automatically include you in their insurance scheme unless you explicitly confirm you do not want it. In this scenario the Trust policy will not operate.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF EDUCATIONAL VISITS WITHIN TRUST SCHOOLS

An educational visit is any outing where pupils are leaving the school site. This may be for a day trip, a local visit, sports events or residential visits. Trust schools have a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom, some of which takes place beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year a number of educational visits and activities will take place off the school site and/or out of school hours. Such visits will afford students with real life and memorable experiences that will lead to improved academic and social outcomes.

The Trust has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of each school:

- Out of hours clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework, etc)
- School teams / fixtures
- Regular nearby visits (including village halls, libraries, shops, parks and woodlands, places of worship, farms)
- Day visits for particular year groups (including to theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, places of worship, zoos, theme parks)
- Residential visits
- Adventurous activities, which might be classed as higher risk, such as sailing, skiing, ice-skating, climbing, abseiling, trekking, caving etc.
- Trips abroad can have extra risks and need a higher level of risk assessment. Schools must make sure any organisation that is providing activities holds the LOtC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge or similar local accreditation.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

Every Trust school must appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to oversee trips undertaken by school groups. The EVC must be an experienced teacher, who will either be a member of the leadership team or on the upper pay scale. At South Borough the named EVC is Lawrence Clarke (DHT).

The EVC must have completed the EVC training, updated every three years, and keep updated with any changes to policy and guidance related to the organisation of educational visits. The Trust encourages schools to use the training provided by their Local Authority.

Alternatively there are online providers, such as:

[EVC Training — EVOLVEadvice](#)

[Educational Visits Co-ordinator \(EVC\) Training \(online\) | Babcock LDP](#)

Schools must ensure that any online training is of suitable quality and provides the necessary accreditations for the EVC to carry out all aspects of the role.

The responsibilities of the EVC are to:

- Be appropriately trained with evidence of accreditation (every 3 years).
- Adhere to and implement the KCC Regulations and Guidance in their school.
- Ensure adequate appropriate insurance is in place and be familiar with the conditions and exclusions of the Trust's school journey policy.
- Ensure that systems and procedures in relation to school trips are reviewed regularly.
- Authorise the school visit form (Appendix 1) alongside the Headteacher (on the EVOLVE system).
- Read and authorise entries entered on the EVOLVE system. At this point, any amendments/queries will be noted through EVOLVE.
- Read and authorise risk assessments through the EVOLVE system.
- Provide advice and support to the Visit Leader and other accompanying adults as needed.
- Check that all visits have an appropriate/up to date emergency contact.
- Ensure staff evaluate visits that have taken place and report accidents/near misses appropriately.

2. Visit Leader

For each school trip, a designated member of staff will have the role of Visit Leader. The Visit Leader must have experience of leading off site visits or must have shadowed an experienced visit leader on past excursions and be approved as competent by the establishment. Visit Leaders can be any member of staff involved in the trip, but should not be an ECT. The Visit Leader must be approved to carry out the visit by the EVC and/or appointed signatory.

2.1 The responsibilities of the Visit Leader will include, but are not limited to:

- Complete a School Visit Form to be signed by the EVC and Executive Headteacher or Head of School (submitted electronically on EVOLVE).
- Liaise with the Trust Finance Team who will:
 - check that the costs are accurate and that the visit is self-funding;
 - set up the trips on ParentPay so that parents can pay.
 - Ensure that the trip finances are in line with the Trust's 'Charging and remissions policy'
- The EVC / Visit Leader must not make any bookings or send any communications to

parents until the School Visit Form has been authorised by the Trust Finance Team.

- Conduct a pre-visit wherever reasonably practical, particularly to unfamiliar sites, as a vital dimension of risk assessment. This allows the Visit Leader to familiarise themselves with the environment, noting hazards, locations of facilities and assess the requirements for effective supervision. The cost of a pre-visit can be incorporated into the total cost of the visit where this has been agreed in advance by the Head of School/Executive Headteacher..
- Organise details in conjunction with the office staff, for the trip such as arranging transport, entry fees, letters to parents etc. Copies of relevant risk assessments, letters to parents and itinerary must be submitted (onto the web based system).
- A completed provider questionnaire for centres providing adventure activities or tour operators that do not have a Learning Outside The Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge must be obtained and submitted (on to the web based system).
- The EVC / Visit Leader must not make any bookings or send any communications to parents until the school visit form has been authorised by the Trust Finance Team.
- Ensure parental permission has been obtained for the children attending the trip. Complete a record of the trip on the EVOLVE / EXEANT system, forwarding it to the EVC and appointed signatory for approval.
- Work with the EVC/assigned signatory to ensure all possible precautions are taken to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- Ensure all adults are aware of possible risks/hazards.
- Brief all adults involved, regarding the nature and the organisation of the trip.
- Debrief adults after the trip to report/address any issues and identify future actions.
- Hold details of adults accompanying the trip and the procedure to be carried out in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure a hard copy of the risk assessment and emergency plan are taken on the trip. Copies of all documentation must be left with the school office and senior leaders before departing.
- Ensure accessibility for ALL children.
- Keep a record of risk assessments in the staff shared drive for all to access.
- Organise the necessary medical information for all children attending.
- Ensure all required medicines are brought and that there is a named person responsible for administering any medications, including appropriate recording of these.
- Arrange for a First Aid trained member of staff to be present.
- Be responsible for pupil groupings, adults, and additionally those pupils requiring FSM.
- Ensure that 'parent helpers' have been given a guide to parental expectations during an educational visit. (See Appendix 2)
- Evaluate the visit and report/record any accidents or near misses.

2.2 As a rule, Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are not expected to be Visit Leaders unless the Headteacher is satisfied that they have the necessary experience and skills to fulfil the duties of the role.

3. Assistant Visit Leader

3.1 The responsibilities of the Visit Leader will include, but are not limited to:

- Be involved in the planning and preparation for the activity/visit, including contributing to the organisation or risk management.
- Ensure understanding of the role and responsibilities assigned and how these integrate with other staff and especially with that of the activity/visit leader.
- Contribute to the visit evaluation, and reporting and recording of accidents and near misses.

4. School Visit Approval

4.1 Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Head of School must approve the initial plan by viewing and signing the School Visit Form. This is completed electronically on EVOLVE.

4.2 Visits that include adventurous activities and/ or a residential element might require approval by the Local Authority via the on-line Visit Notification and Approval system. EVOLVE / EXEANT Usernames and Passwords will be managed by the EVC.

4.3 Day visits that do not include adventurous activities but involve groups travelling both inside and outside Kent or East Sussex will be registered on EVOLVE / EXEANT.

4.4 Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit, the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils.

4.5 For out of hours clubs, school teams and nearby visits, parents will be asked to sign a letter of consent for participation in these activities. Parents will be given the timetable for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed as soon as is practicably possible if an activity has to be cancelled.

4.6 For any visit lasting a day or more, parents will also be asked to sign a letter, which consents to their child taking part. This will include a separate medical consent form. Each school must have a standard model letter, which should be used for this purpose.

4.7 The Trust has a separate policy for 'Charging and Remissions' which applies to all educational visits.

5. Staffing

5.1 The Trust recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.

5.2 Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning and behaviour in a variety of environments. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

5.3 Individuals who engage in regulated activity with young people or vulnerable adults should undergo an enhanced DBS check, with a barred list check. Therefore, it may not be necessary for a parent helper to have a DBS check for a day trip unless they meet the criteria for frequency or intensity as stated below.

- **Frequency** is defined as once per week or more.
- **Intensity** is defined as 4 days or more in a 30 day period or overnight (between 2am and 6am, where there is an opportunity for face to face contact).

Where the visit involves a residential an **enhanced DBS and barred list check is required.**

Any volunteer adults that are not DBS checked will remain within sight of a member of staff at all times.

5.4 On residential visits the gender of the staff responsible for supervision and pastoral care will reflect the gender of the pupils.

5.5 Adequate levels of supervision and staffing must be established for the journey/visit based on such factors as the gender, age and ability of the children, the presence of pupils with special educational needs, the nature/length of the journey, the environment and nature of activities to be undertaken and the experience and competence of the staff involved.

Guidance for pupil-staff ratios:

- One adult for every six pupils in school years 1 to 3 (under-5s reception classes should have a higher ratio of 1:4).
- One adult for every ten to 15 pupils in school years 4 to 6.
- One adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards.

These staffing allocations should be regarded as minimum.

A minimum of two Swale Academies Trust Staff should be involved in every school journey, regardless of how many other adults are helping.

5.6 Where swimming activities are involved, there must be provision for supervision by qualified, competent swimming instructors.

5.7 SEND pupils should have, where necessary, additional adult support assigned to them to ensure their needs are met.

5.8 It is recognised as best practice that the Visit Leader should not be assigned a group. If adult numbers dictate that a group leader must have their own group, adults and groupings should be arranged so that an additional adult is with them.

5.9 The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit,

briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

6. Risk assessment

A risk assessment must be completed for all school visits. This will be uploaded onto the EVOLVE system as part of the visit record. For regular visits, i.e to swimming lessons, a standard risk assessment may be used but will be reviewed as necessary. Pupils must learn to recognise and manage risks and understand their responsibilities. Adults will involve children in risk assessment wherever possible.

7. Overseas Visits

When planning an overseas visit, before booking with a provider or tour operator, consideration must be given to the geopolitical risks associated with the destination(s). In some circumstances it will be necessary for the visit leader and EVC to complete a threat assessment (appendix 3). Information from the [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) will be sought when completing the assessment as will information from the proposed tour operator and an in country source where possible. Be aware that the travel list relating to coronavirus could change prior to or during your visit, you must comply with international travel legislation and should have contingency plans in place to account for these changes. You must consult with your insurers and tour operators to discuss covid cover in your policy including medical treatment, repatriation, cancellation or costs involved with quarantining.

The threat assessment should identify the significant geopolitical risks, including civil disturbance and also highlight and address any issues focusing upon inclusivity issues such as attitudes and laws towards LGBTQ+ students and staff. **This needs to be completed before booking with a provider.**

Where a threat assessment is required, the results should be discussed with the OEA and EVC. In some circumstances a meeting will be required to discuss the proposed plan for the visit including the requirements and expectations of the provider. This meeting will take place **at least 6 months in advance.**

In situations where a school wishes to proceed with a visit despite the significant and likely threat to the group, which are not balanced by the benefits, or where the benefits could be achieved through an alternative destination the school would not be permitted to go ahead with the planned visit.

For all other overseas visits parental consent needs to acknowledge that they have been fully informed of the visit arrangements, including the planned activities, accommodation type, travel arrangements and the risks involved in all aspects of the visit. Parents should also be made aware of the emergency medical facilities available to the group throughout the visit.

Once a visit has been completed the visit leader must complete a review of the visit which is discussed with the EVC and significant incidents or learning should be shared with OEA. For

visits to destinations that require a threat assessment to be conducted the visit leader EVC will need to give feedback to the OEA to highlight successes, key learning points and near misses. This meeting will take place **within 2 weeks of returning**.

Since departing from the European Union (EU) government advice: [Foreign travel advice - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice) on travel to Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein should be checked if these are the intended destination.

8. The Expectations of Pupils and Parents

Each Trust school expects pupils to conduct themselves in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This will be part of the conditions of booking by the parents. Guidance will be given to parents to explain that there is the potential of withdrawal prior to and during the visit if such conduct would have led to a fixed term exclusion from school.

9. Emergency Procedures

9.1 Each school will appoint a member of the SLT as the emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

9.2 The Visit Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin, as appropriate.

9.3 The Visit Leader will take with them a copy of the school's Major Incident Procedures, along with the contact details of the appointed emergency school contacts.

9.4 All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems. The Kent Outdoor Education Unit should also be advised of any serious incidents or accidents.

10. Inclusion

10.1 Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil to whom one of the protected characteristics applies (disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation) in the way that it affords (or not) the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Every effort must be made to ensure that offsite activities and educational visits are available and accessible to all, making reasonable efforts to find a venue and activities that are suitable and accessible for the whole group to participate in fully. Visit leaders should consider the needs of the group at the earliest point when planning a visit, so they can ensure the needs of the young people are met. In some circumstances it may be impossible for reasonable adjustments to enable someone to be included on a visit, in this case it is not necessary to deprive the rest of the group however you must demonstrate that what happened was for a reason other than unfair discrimination.

10.2 Exclusion for Behaviour

Behaviour is not a protected characteristic defined by the Equalities Act 2010. It may therefore be acceptable to exclude someone from an activity or visit if their potential behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety or welfare of either themselves or others, or to the successful completion of the activity or visit. However, if the behaviour is associated with a protected characteristic, great care should be taken to ensure that discrimination does not take place.

11. Transport

Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in the activity itself, meaning careful planning is required.

If buses or coaches are hired, this should be through a reputable company.

When using public transport, inform the company of the size of the group and the date on which you plan to travel. Be respectful to members of the public and be aware of strikes, delays and cancellations.

12. Evaluation

12.1 All visits will be evaluated by the Visit Leader with the EVC. A short evaluation report will be submitted on the EVOLVE / EXEANT system.

12.2 The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments for the visits or activities are evaluated and/or modified as a result of findings or feedback from the visit.

12.3 Any significant concerns or learning points should be shared with the OEA. Where overseas visits have taken place, which required the need for a threat assessment to be conducted, then feedback to the OEA must be completed within two weeks of returning.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Off Site Visits/Educational Visits
- ESCC Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy
- Charging & Remissions Policy

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