



St Nicholas Catholic Academy

'Our Catholic school is a diverse, nurturing and dynamic community which is faithful to Jesus, welcoming to all and provides a learning environment where everyone can succeed'.

Educational Visits Policy

November 2022

Policy Outline:

This policy is to outline the educational visits ethos and procedures that take place within the school.

1. Introduction

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 us 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.

This policy will help us conduct educational visits in a safe and well-structured manner, giving our pupils and staff the best experience possible.

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, we:

1. Adopt the Local Authority's (LA) or SJCMAT document: (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE.
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oepng.info.
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for all off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy (i.e. this document), SJCMAT policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

2. Clarification of roles

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements. Our expectations are that visit leaders are both competent and confident in leading a visit as described in 3.4k visit or activity leader in National Guidance.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) 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 EVC's role is described in detail in 3.4j EVC role in National Guidance.

Our Educational Visits Coordinator is:

Mr D. Lee – Deputy Headteacher

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to SJCMAT for approval, via EVOLVE. The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that the planning and risk management for this visit has been checked and approved according to the current Educational Visits policy. That the visit complies with the SJCMAT current planning checklist for off-site activities. The visit leader and staff are competent to supervise the visit. The Risk management is fit for purpose. The head teacher's role is described fully in National guidance 3.4g Head teacher or manager.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend', see National Guidance 3.4f for additional information. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

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

3. Procedural requirements

As set out in the Local Authority or the SJCMAT Educational Visits Policy, visits can be categorised into three categories, these are:

Category A

These are activities that present no significant risks. They should be supervised by a teacher who has been assessed as competent by the LA or Educational Visit Co-ordinator, where appropriate, to lead the activity. Examples include walking in parks, field studies in environments presenting no technical hazards or low risk sports competitions.

Category B

These comprise some higher-risk or higher-profile activities. LA approval is required for this category of activity. Safe supervision requires that the Group Leader should as a minimum, have undergone familiarisation specific to the activity and / or the location. The Group Leader will have to be approved as suitably competent by the LA, and hold any necessary qualification/award. Examples include; walking in non-remote country, camping or cycling on roads.

Category C

This is the most demanding category. It includes all those activities that if not school-led, would be in the scope of the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996. LA approval is required for visits in this category. In the case of sports, where safe supervision requires the leader to complete some prior test of his/her specific competence, such testing might include a recognised course of training, the recorded accumulation of relevant experience or an assessment of competence by an appropriate body.

Local Area Visits

What are Local Area Visits?

DfE classify trips into 2 main types: **Routine Visits** and **Trips that need a risk assessment and extra planning**:

DfE state that routine visits involve “...*no more than an everyday level of risk... covered by school’s current policies and procedures... They can be considered as lessons in a different classroom.*”

So, **Local Area Visits** can be defined as **low risk visits** to venues in your **local learning area** (category A)

Often these visits are not recorded in EVOLVE because the visit form requires too much information or the type of visit/activity doesn’t require the same level of approval.

Parental Consent

All visits which are category A visits are covered by the annual consent form which is sent to parents at the start of each academic year. It is important that visit leaders check annual consent has been granted for individual children on the trip.

It is essential that parents are sent letters with information regarding the visit which must include details, time of visit and return, location, any specific requirements and to remind parents to ensure medical information is up to date (this list is not exhaustive).

Category B and C visits must have specific consent and up to date medical information from parents for children to participate.

Approval

For Category A visits the group leader should request permission to lead no later than **14 days** before the trip takes place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame.

Section 7 *Risk management and risk benefit* determines whether a generic risk assessment is sufficient or if a visit specific risk assessment needs to be conducted.

For Category B/C visits, the group leader should request permission no later than **6 weeks** before the trips take place. Information should be inputted onto EVOLVE within this time frame. Visit specific risk assessments must be conducted for these visits.

Evaluation

All trips must be evaluated, no later than 4 weeks after return. This should be done on EVOLVE by the group leader.

4. Monitoring

In order to ensure safe, quality visits, we understand that National Guidance provides advice about monitoring in 3.2b monitoring.

The EVC has the responsibility of monitoring visits to ensure that:

- Visits and activities are carried out safely and effectively and in line with the Local Authority policy, SJCMAT and procedures.
- Relevant policies and procedures are reviewed and updated to remain current and in line with good practice.
- Staff have easy access to the school policy
- Staff have access to relevant training that supports the implementation of this policy
- The school appoints, trains and revalidate EVCs in accordance with the SJCMAT policy
- The school keep proper records.

The EVC monitoring should also include an element of field observations.

5. Induction, training, apprenticeship, succession planning

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.
- Any member of staff leading a residential or self-led adventurous activity must have attend visit leader training

6. Risk management and risk-benefit assessment

Risk Assessments

We understand that in order to deliver safe visits comprehensive risk assessments need to take place. For a number of visits, generic risk assessments are suitable for safe trips. Generic risk assessments are developed by the EVC and are reviewed every year. They are kept for a minimum of 3 years. These generic risk assessments are stored on EVOLVE under establishment documents and include:

- Mini-bus
- Walking
- Hired coach with driver
- Park visits
- Sports competitions in school hall
- Public buildings
- Crossing roads in safe place
- Use of public toilets etc.

For all category B and C trips, event specific risk assessments must be completed and attached to the EVOLVE form.

Ratios

Activity and Visit Leaders must ensure that young people are supervised in accordance with the principles of "Effective Supervision", requiring them to take account of:

- The nature of the activity (including its duration).
- The location and environment in which the activity is to take place.
- The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised.
- The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs).

- Staff competence.
- Distance

Our starting point for minimum ratios are as follows:

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Category A | (minimum number of staff): |
| Nursery | 1:3 (possibly 1:1 depending upon activity and location) |
| Reception | 1:5 (possibly 1:1 depending upon activity and location) |

(Ratio of 1:1 achieved by asking a child's parent to accompany their child on the trip)

| | |
|---------|---|
| Y1 – Y2 | 1:6 (possibly 1:8 depending upon activity and location) |
| Y3 – Y4 | 1:8 |
| Y5 – Y6 | 1:10 (possibly 1:15 depending upon activity and location) |

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| Category B | (minimum number of staff): |
| Nursery | 1:3 (possibly 1:1 depending upon activity and location) |
| Reception | 1:5 (possibly 1:1 depending upon activity and location) |

(Ratio of 1:1 achieved by asking a child's parent to accompany their child on the trip)

| | |
|---------|------|
| Y1 – Y2 | 1:6 |
| Y3 – Y4 | 1:8 |
| Y5 – Y6 | 1:10 |

| | |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Category C | (minimum number of staff): |
| Nursery | N/A |
| Reception | N/A |
| Y1 – Y2 | N/A |

| | |
|---------|-----|
| Y3 – Y4 | 1:6 |
| Y5 – Y6 | 1:8 |

All ratios are subject to change and are determined by the activity and the requirements outlined below:

In order to determine the actual number of staff needed we will use the framework described through SAGE

- **Staffing:** who is needed/available? The plan must work within the limits of available numbers, abilities and experience.
- **Activities to be undertaken:** what do you want the group to do and what is possible?
- **Group characteristics:** prior experience, abilities, behaviour and maturity, any specific or medical/dietary needs.
- **Environment:** indoors or out; a public space or restricted access; urban, rural or remote; quiet or crowded; within the establishment grounds, close to the establishment or at a

distance; and the ease of communications between the group and base. Do not overlook environments to be passed through between venues. For residential visits consider the accommodation and surrounding area. For outdoor environments, consider remoteness, the impact of weather, water levels and ground conditions.

- **Distance:** how far is the activity away from school or base

7. Assessing venues and providers

In line with Local Authority and SJCMAT, we accept and acknowledge the LOfC quality badge. This ensures that the provider we are using has the correct risk assessments and insurance in place and are suitable to use. In all other cases we will ask providers to fill in a provider form which is available in the resources on EVOLVE.

8. Volunteers

In order for us to support our students on school visits we use a range of different volunteers. These volunteers must comply with our school safeguarding policy.

Responsibility will be delegated to them by the visit leader. They must be sufficiently competent and confident to carry out their responsibilities. The level of competence and the thoroughness of the engagement process depend upon the role that the volunteer is to take, and the degree to which they will be working independently or under supervision. Where they are working independently it should be to the same standard as would be expected of an employee or contractor taking on the role.

9. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

For all trips taking place outside of school time, two emergency contacts must be inputted on to EVOLVE.

Visit leaders and deputy leaders should have access to the emergency contact details, EVOLVE form, parents contact details and children's medical/behavioural details. They will also take the school Emergency Action Plan crib card with them in how to deal with an emergency

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 School Emergency Management Plan). 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.

10. Behaviour

As a school we expect all children to behave to the standards described in our code of conduct.

Before any trip or residential, parents are made aware of consequences of breaking the school code of conduct. This may include members of staff or parents being asked to remove a child in prescribed circumstances.

11. Inclusion

We are a fully inclusive school and believe in the following principles:

- A presumption of entitlement to participate.
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification.
- Integration through participation with peers.

We follow the standards set out in National Guidance 3.2e Inclusion

12. Insurance

We are covered by the local authority blanket insurance for visits and trips.

13. Finance

For school visits, we collect all finance in either cash or by cheque. All charging and voluntary contributions requested for the visits are in line with National guidance 3.2c

Policy produced by: *Mr D. Lee*

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