



# Rushton CE (VC) Primary School

*Happy Learning Together*

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## Educational Visits Policy

Committee	Full Govs
Approved by Governors	Nov 18
Review Date	Nov 19
Cycle	Annual

**The School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share their commitment.**

The school works within the requirements set out in Staffordshire County Council's Educational Visits Policy document on managing off-site activity and learning outside the classroom.

### Policy Statement

Rushton CE Primary School acknowledges the many benefits of learning outside the classroom and is committed to supporting educational visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of all children and young people.

All school staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

### 1. OEAP National Guidance

Staffordshire County Council has formally adopted Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (NG) as its guidance for the management of off-site visits and learning outside of the classroom (LOtC). This guidance can be found on the following web site:

<http://oeapng.info/>

It is a legal expectation that employees **must** work within the requirements of their employer's guidance; therefore Rushton CE Primary School must follow the requirements of NG, as well as the requirements of this policy statement.

### 2. Scope and Remit

The NG document Status, Remit and Rationale clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- Direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- Direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside of the Classroom;
- Facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- Deploying staff that will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base.

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

### **3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements**

Rushton CE Primary School accesses the Staffordshire online system (EVOLVE) for notification and approval of visits. A key feature of this system is that visits and LOtC activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Local Authority (LA). Those visits and activities not requiring approval may be viewed, sampled or monitored using the database and diary facilities of the system.

It is a requirement that all 'Staffordshire' schools and SYPS establishments use the EVOLVE system.

Staffordshire also provides:

- Appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
- Employer led training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- Suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- Access to advice, support and further training from appointed advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

The relevant training courses in Staffordshire are:

- Staffordshire Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) Training – all Staffordshire schools and SYPS establishments are required to have a current trained EVC in post. Currently there is no requirement for formal revalidation.
- Staffordshire Visit Leader Training – this course is strongly recommended for all those who lead LOtC activities.

For the purposes of day to day updating of information, Staffordshire EVCs and Visit Leaders are directed to the posting of updates (which include information on how to access the relevant courses) available on EVOLVE.

Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help and guidance, they should contact their establishment's Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in the first instance. Further help and guidance can be obtained through the Educational Visits team who are best contacted by e-mail at [eva@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:eva@staffordshire.gov.uk) The nominated advisers in Staffordshire are Gareth Lloyd 07794331637 and Chris Dillon 07969097487.

### **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring visits are approved as necessary, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the timetable and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following tasks: -

- To grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable.
- To check and approve that the planning and risk management for visits follows employer policy and guidance, and to liaise with the LA as required.
- To ensure that there is sample monitoring of visits in keeping with the recommendations of employer policy and guidance

The designated EVC for Rushton Primary School is Rhiannon Capewell who received training in the role.

The Headteacher will ensure that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

Visit Leaders will have over-all charge of the visits they lead, which will be effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing. Relevant visit information is shared with parents and consent is sought where necessary.

Details related to a visit and its participants (including staff) will be accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact in case of emergencies.

## **5. Procedures**

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective visit leaders) should first seek permission from the Headteacher. Once granted they should then add the visit details through the EVOLVE system which will then be automatically passed to the EVC for checking and approval that the planning and risk management for the visit follows employer policy and guidance. The Headteacher will further be asked to declare that the Visit leader and staff are competent to supervise the visit.

Approval from the Local Authority (LA) will be required for **all** overseas visits, residential visits and those which include adventurous activities, be it provider or establishment lead. The EVOLVE system will automatically pass such identified visits to the LA for approval.

Visits requiring LA approval should be submitted **six working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and before anyone is financially committed. Approval notification will be sent out as soon as possible up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

Regularly repeated visits e.g. sports fixtures, may receive block annual approval subject to parents/carers being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal school day.

## **6. Risk Management**

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. The school recommends a 'risk-benefit assessment' approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is 'acceptable'. HSE endorse this approach through their 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management' and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal or 'Staffordshire' requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual or harm several people. However, Staffordshire EVC training ensures that establishments are supplied with an electronic portfolio of exemplar generic risk-benefit assessments, as well as exemplar event-specific assessments. These risk management materials can also be accessed through EVOLVE.

At Rushton CE Primary School risk assessment are completed for all visits. These are produced using the LA proforma located on the Staff shared area under 'Risk Assessment'

It is strongly recommended that establishments adopt and adapt these materials to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of the LOtC learning opportunities.

For further information please refer to NG document Risk Management

## 7. Emergency Procedures

The risk assessments for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For visits extending beyond the school day this includes designating a home contact from the school who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents, the school and the County Council in the event of an emergency.

In the event of a delay (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the school must be contacted as soon as possible to inform the Headteacher or designated deputy so that they can decide: -

**A.** If the incident is of a less serious nature then the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the visit leader will be designated to undertake this task.

**B.** However, if the incident is very serious i.e. considered a critical incident to contact Staffordshire County Council using the emergency contact phone number and details given below:

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has either suffered a life threatening injury or fatality, is at serious risk; or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

**Staffordshire County Council “Director on Call”** Pager number is: **07623 910065**.

The emergency contact phone number for Staffordshire County Council outside office hours is **00-44-1785-278499 or 00-44-8451-213322**. This is the number for Staffordshire Fire & Rescue Service Fire Control and it will be answered by a Control Operator. Upon connection, please provide the Operator with your **name, a contact number and a brief outline of what has happened**. Then ask the Control Operator to page the CCU Duty Officer and to pass this information in full onto him/her. Please note that calls to the **numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities**. This provision is not for resolving matters such as lost passports, lost luggage and forgotten items such as medication. These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

## 8. Monitoring

The governing body will be informed of any Residential Visits taking place. The governing body will receive reports from the Headteacher detailing the school visits that have taken place. As an employer, ‘Staffordshire’ also ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and LOtC activities undertaken by its establishments.

## 9. Charges for Off-Site Activities and Visits

‘Staffordshire’ Heads and Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996. For further information please refer to NG document Charges for Off-Site Activity and Rushton Primary School Charging and Remissions Policy.

## 10. Requirements to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general terms, the law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is 'effective'. Effective supervision should be determined by a proper consideration of:

- Age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- Gender issues;
- Ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);
- Nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions)
- Staff competence

As an exception to the above Ofsted and DfE guidance prescribe ratios for Early Years.

*The DfE publication HASPEV (1998) suggests the following 'starting points'*

*School Years 1-3, 1:6*

*School Years 4-6, 1:10/15*

## 11. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, a preliminary visit will be carried out. A preliminary visit should be carried out for all new visits and required for all residential visits

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge
- Adventure Activities Licensing Service (AALS) licensing
- Adventuremark
- National governing body (NGB) centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

'Staffordshire' takes the view that where a provider holds such one of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

Visits to the 'Staffordshire' Outdoor Education Service centres do not require approval or notification as they are self-approving.

## 11. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability insurance is a statutory requirement and 'Staffordshire' holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it where negligence attaches. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. Staffordshire also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property where negligence attaches. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are all voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

Limited Personal Accident insurance is provided for all Staffordshire employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident in respect of qualifying injuries. The school buys into the optional School Journey scheme which gives benefits that exceed those of most tour operators and provides a phone number giving rapid access to support and assistance in the event of a claim.

When providers are used it is a requirement for them to hold Public Liability insurance cover with a minimum limit of indemnity of £5M.

For further information please refer to NG document Insurance 7 Document: Educational Visits Policy

For further information and advice on insurance matters please contact:

**Ian Gough Risk & Insurance Manager**

*Insurance Services, Staffordshire County Council*

*Office Address: Staffordshire Place 2, 2nd Floor, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2LP*

*Postal Address: Wedgwood Building, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH*

*Email [ian.gough@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:ian.gough@staffordshire.gov.uk)*

*Tel 01785 276476*

## 12. Inclusion

Every effort is made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every *reasonable* effort is made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved. Rushton CE Primary School takes all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all pupils. The principles of inclusion are promoted and addressed for all visits ensuring an aspiration towards:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

## 13. Good Practice Requirements

To be deemed competent, a Staffordshire Visit Leader, or Assistant Visit Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role*.

NG sets a clear standard to which 'Staffordshire' leaders **must** work. The guidance states:

*'a competent Visit/Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:*

- *Knowledge and understanding of their school's guidance supported by training.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of school's procedures.*
- *Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience*
- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification'*

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff.

Where a volunteer helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's

plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the risk-benefit assessment.

Similarly, it is good practice for the home contact not to be related to (or otherwise in a close relationship to) any of the young people or staff taking part in the visit.

For further information please refer to NG document Good Practice Basics

#### **14. Transport**

Careful thought is given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits and the school **must** follow the specialist guidance provided in Staffordshire's transport policy. All national and local regulatory requirements **must** be followed. The level of supervision necessary will be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus. The Visit Leader will ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company. Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures.

Please refer to NG documents:

[Transport \(General Considerations\)](#)

[Transport \(Minibuses\)](#)

[Transport \(Private Cars\)](#)

Further information and advice is available from 'Staffordshire's' Road Safety and Sustainable Travel team.

#### **15. Accident Reporting**

All accidents that involve anyone – employees, pupils, service users, contractors or members of the public – on County Council premises or anywhere else when engaged in County Council activities are to be handled in line with 'Staffordshire's' Accident Policy. Accident investigation and employee hazard report forms are available from the Health and Safety intranet site alongside other relevant policies and useful information. A copy of any County Accident Forms (HSF40) submitted to the Strategic Health and Safety Service should be attached to the visit form on EVOLVE.