

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



WS Learning Outside the Classroom

Feeding an appetite for learning

MODEL POLICY

LEARNING OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM (LOTc)

AND

OFF-SITE EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Approved March 2022

Outdoor Education Adviser, September 2021

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Model Policy for Learning Outside the Classroom and Off-site Educational Visits

1. Introduction

1.1 St Mary's Catholic Primary School provides many opportunities for its pupils to learn and develop through Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) activities and visits and recognise the key role they play in the development of an active curriculum. This encompasses both on-site and off-site learning, residential activities, environmental studies, sports, physical and cultural activities, business visits, and adventurous activities. Our aim is to ensure every member of our school community accesses LOtC activities throughout their curriculum and that LOtC is considered as an educational entitlement

Our Mission Statement and School Aims

- 1 To teach the Catholic Faith and lead the children to a more active and personal faith in Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, so that we are a sign of God's presence in the world.
- 2 To follow the example of Christ by promoting and interpreting the meaning of the Gospel values and reflecting them in all we do.
- 3 To pray that the Holy Spirit will guide and support us to fulfil our lives to their greatest potential.
- 4 To nurture the development of each child within a safe, secure and caring environment which reflects the Christian way of life.
- 5 To provide each child with opportunities and experiences to enjoy learning and to develop their potential to the highest level.
- 6 To develop each child's understanding of how to be healthy and safe.
- 7 To ensure each child has opportunities to express themselves and is able to make reasoned judgements and choices.
- 8 To collaborate with other agencies and services in order to provide children with quality education, support and care.
- 9 To work with parents/carers as partners in their child's education, listening to their views and providing guidance and support as appropriate.
- 10 To foster understanding and respect for other cultures, traditions and faiths.
- 11 To encourage each child to value our school in Bognor Regis and to use their gifts and talents to make a positive contribution to their local and global community.



1.2 The value of LOtC activities and visits are well recognised by the Governing Body and fully supported throughout the school by all staff. It is emphasised that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory procedures. The safety culture is such that children and young people are encouraged and supported to recognise hazards and manage risk in a way that supports their learning and development. Learning Outside the Classroom must be well managed with information communicated and responsibilities recognised as with any other learning that takes place within the school.

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1.3 This document outlines the specific policies and procedures for St Mary's Catholic Primary School. It supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following significant publications:

- WSCC's Regulations and Notes of Guidance for Learning Outside the Classroom Activities and Visits.
- WSCC's Adventurous Activities Reference Document.
- The Department for Education (DfE) published guidance Health and Safety on Education Visits www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits
- OEAP National Guidance www.oeapng.info.
- DfE advice on health & safety: responsibilities and duties for schools <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-advice-for-schools>
- The Health and Safety Executive statement: "School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities – Tackling the Health & Safety myths. available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

2. Roles and Responsibilities

2.1 The **Governing Body** satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk management processes and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All residential experiences need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Governing Body.

2.2 The **Head Teacher** is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all LOtC activities and off-site educational visits of a low risk, local, daily or regular nature. This is recorded through use of internal permission/cover arrangements/checklist form.

2.3 The **Educational Visits Co-ordinator** (EVC) ensures that all LOtC activities and visits follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities will approve the Group Leadership Team for every visit and monitor the risk management processes to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- Support the Group Leader in identifying the purpose and outcomes for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of

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appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers. It is important to consider the continuing professional development needs of staff engaged in these activities.

- Ensure that Disclosure and Barring Scheme disclosures are in place, where necessary.
- Arrange Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event. **To be read alongside the school Emergency Plan);**
- Keep records and make reports of incidents, accidents and 'near misses'.
- Review and regularly monitor policies and procedures.
- Liaise with the Outdoor Education Adviser where necessary to ensure the proposed visit complies with the WSCC policies for Learning Outside the Classroom.

2.4 The Group Leader is responsible for identifying the purpose and outcomes for the visit. Significant hazards and their control measures will need to be recorded and attached to the EVOLVE visit form (available at <http://www.westsussexvisits.org>).

This will take account of:

- Generic hazards.
- Event specific hazards as identified from a pre-visit or through knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the competence of the staff team, the group and other factors such as transport.
- On-going hazards identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose, outcomes and the risk management process.
- All policies that exist within the school that must be applied when working off-site, for example safeguarding, behaviour policy, managing medicines etc.

2.5 Participants are encouraged to consider hazards involved in LOtC activities and off-site educational visits and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning. They will be fully aware of

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the purpose and outcomes of the visit and understand expectations of behaviour. They will be able to evaluate the experience and the impact it has had on their learning.

3. Guidance Notes for LOtC Activities and Off-Site Educational Visits

To ensure good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that:

3.1 All Group Leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance.

Further information is available from the EVOLVE website (www.westsussexvisits.org).

Training for staff will be arranged by the school to include all aspects of supervision, on-going risk management (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency. Access to such training is also available through the Outdoor Education Adviser.

3.2 In order to plan LOtC activities and visits the EVC or Headteacher should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. Routine or local visits such as sports fixtures also need to be planned. It may be possible to approve a series of events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.

3.3 On all visits there must be 'effective supervision' that has been approved by the EVC and Headteacher, and where applicable, in accordance with Governing Body policy.

Ratios for Early Years are specified and must be adhered to; see Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage. For all other visits the Group Leader, EVC and Headteacher will make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis after consideration of the following factors:

- The type, level, and duration of activity;
- The nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- The experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- The venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- The contingency, or 'Plan B' options.

A visit must not go ahead where either the Group Leader, EVC, or Headteacher is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

Group Leaders, EVCs and Headteachers often find it helpful to have a 'starting point' or 'maximum number' of children/young people to an adult. In the past this has been published by the Department for Education and WSCC as being:

EYFS(e.g. 4-5 year olds) 1:4

Key Stage One, (e.g. 5-7 year olds) 1:6

Key Stage Two, (e.g. 8-11 year olds) 1:12

Where departure from the 'maximum' or 'starting point' results in fewer staff, the justification should be recorded as a note on EVOLVE or in the risk assessment documentation for that visit. Good practice expects a mixed gender of staffing for a mixed gender of participants.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Staff and volunteers who work frequently or intensively with, or have regular access to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check (The Disclosure and Barring Service) as part of their recruitment process. For the purpose of this guidance:

- 'Frequently' is defined as 'once a week or more';
- 'Intensively' is defined as 'four or more days in a month, or overnight'.

All Volunteer Helpers must be given an induction and made aware of the establishment's policies and procedures for Health & Safety.

Refer to National Guidance document: Group Management and Supervision

Refer to National Guidance document: Vetting and CRB Checks

3.4 Hard copy/electronic copy of Parent/Carer contact details, copy Risk Assessment, copy Medical Conditions and copy Parent/Carer General Permissions are provided to the Group Leader for the visit.

3.5 Internal Approval Form is used to approve regular, low risk or routine visits such as sports fixtures.

3.6 An EVOLVE Visit form must be completed for all residential visits, visits abroad, visits out of county and or for all adventurous activities whether on-site or off-site. The form will need to be submitted to the LA, four weeks in advance of the activity or visit date and before the school becomes financially committed. Residential visits need the Governing Body's approval. School Journey Insurance should be purchased for educational visits and evidence should be attached to the EVOLVE form. Group Leaders should avoid duplicate of cover being provided by a tour operator, or external provider.

3.7 The OE2 form provides information on what WSCC expects an external provider to provide and deliver. It should be sent to any provider being considered for the first time and attached to the EVOLVE form as evidence of the planning process. Please note WSCC 'check' a number providers who are regularly used by WSCC establishments, these providers are listed on EVOLVE as 'checked' in addition providers who hold the LOtC Quality Badge are considered as suitable to offer activities and have achieved a nationally recognised accreditation.

3.8 On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed to support any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place. If such a form was completed at the venue, there is a need to place such an occurrence on the record at the 'home' establishment.

In addition, it is highly recommended that an evaluation of the visit's purpose and outcomes is carried out to review the learning achieved and educational value. It is possible, within 28 days, to record this through the EVOVE visit form.

3.9 Risk management forms should be completed and attached to the EVOLVE form when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk management documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required (see www.hse.gov.uk/aala). If this is the case, the provider's licence number should be quoted instead of copies of their risk assessment documentation.

3.10 Providers that hold a Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (CLOtC) Quality Badge have been externally assessed and are acceptable as a 'checked' provider on the EVOLVE site.