



# ST. AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Educational Visits Policy

### Mission Statement

"I called you by your name, you are mine." Isaiah 43

The mission of our school is to support and further the teachings of Christ and His Church.

We welcome and embrace individuals of all abilities and cultural backgrounds.

We aim to enhance and celebrate their moral, physical, social and emotional development, so that they may reach their full potential in an atmosphere of stability, care and respect.

We believe that education is for all and in partnership with parents, carers, children and the wider Catholic community: we will strive and succeed in a wholly inclusive setting.

This policy was adopted January 2018

The policy is to be reviewed January 2019

Written by: Mrs Claire Burns Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC)

Written with reference to: Medway model policy guidance from EVOLVE; Medway Council Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities; National Guidance <https://oeapng.info>

## Context

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 St. Augustine of Canterbury 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 real life experiences and embedding classroom knowledge, 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 participators 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. E.g. 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, St. Augustine of Canterbury:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance [www.oeapng.info](http://www.oeapng.info) (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, 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 this school policy, Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

## Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

- 1. Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**  
These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
- 2. Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity. E.g. visits to museums, farms, theme parks, theatres, etc.**  
These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Headteacher for approval.
- 3. Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**  
These follow 2. above, but the Headteacher then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

## Roles and responsibilities

**Visit leaders** are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC prior to planning, and before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements, and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

**The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** is Mrs Claire Burns 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, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Headteacher. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

**The Head Teacher** has responsibility for authorising visits, and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the LA for approval.

**The Governing Body's** role is that of a 'critical friend'. They ensure that the policy and National Guidance is followed (see National Guidance <https://oeapng.info> for additional information). Individual governors may be given 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

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

## 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/or Headteacher 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.

## 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 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is reviewed regularly 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

St. Augustine of Canterbury's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities, and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources. 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

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time.

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain routine activities, eg. Library visits, local area walks, visits to local shops, swimming, trips to other places of worship etc.

Specific, (i.e. one-off), parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

## **Inclusion**

At St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary school we believe that activities should be available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medical needs or protected characteristics. When a visit or activity is being planned, all reasonably practicable measures must be taken to include all children. Every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue and activities that are both suitable and accessible and that enable the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

At St. Augustine of Canterbury we endorse the principles of inclusion:

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

Further guidance can be found under section 3.2e Inclusion in the National Guidance

<http://oeapng.info>

## **Charging / funding for visits**

The principles of best value will be applied when planning activities that incur costs to the school and/or charges to parents. When charges are made for any activity, whether during or outside of the school day, they will be based on the actual costs incurred, divided by the total number of pupils participating. There will be no levy on those who can pay to support those who can't. Support for cases of hardship will come through voluntary contributions and fundraising. (Please refer to the Charging and Remissions policy.)

## **Transport**

At St Augustine of Canterbury Catholic Primary School we ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company, which are approved by the Local Authority.

Event Specific Notes (ESN) should address supervision and managing groups when travelling, including the use of public transport when applicable.

### **Use of staff cars to transport pupils**

Where a private (staff or volunteer) car is to be used to transport young people, then this must be approved by the Headteacher, and a Private Car Form must be completed and retained by the school, and updated accordingly. See also the Medway Council Guidance for Off-Site Visits and Related Activities.

## **Insurance**

Medway is the group policy holder of our insurance, which is provided by AIG Europe Limited. This also covers off-site activities for *"pupils, teaching and support staff, adult volunteers, helpers, assistants and other authorised children."*

## **Other topics**

### **Swimming Lessons**

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan ESN, and lifeguarding arrangements checked in advance. Changing room behaviour and staff supervision will be addressed on the ESN and will outline the nature of the space e.g. group changing, changing "villages" etc. During these times, indirect supervision will take place, with visit leaders ensuring that all children understand the behaviour expectations that apply at all times.

### **Dismissal of children after activities**

If an Educational visit or activity is known to end after the school day finishes, then arrangements will be explained in the consent letter. For visits and activities that may have no fixed finish time e.g. Medway Mini Youth Tournaments; or if there is a delay due to traffic, an approximate return time may be given, and parent/carers will be contacted via Parentmail to inform.

Dismissal of children after activities will follow the school end of day procedures, with consent obtained for alternative adult collection and for children walking home by themselves.

# Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

## General

Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- should be recorded on EVOLVE if regular, e.g. library visits
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE if these are ad-hoc activities e.g. traffic survey

## Boundaries

The School Learning Area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- *St. Augustine's Church*
- *Parkwood Green and local shops*
- *Peveral Green and local shop*
- *Wigmore Library*
- *Hempstead Valley Shopping Centre*
- *Foxburrow Wood*
- *Other local schools - Deanwood, Parkwood*

## Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- 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).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Headteacher, Deputy/EVC or other member of SLT must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.

- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will complete the 'Signing-out sheet' and give it in to the office upon leaving the school, providing an estimated time of return.
- A (school) mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- High Visibility tabards are worn by children and staff.

## Appendix 2 – 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 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. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry either:
  - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
  - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card (Available via [www.oeap.info](http://www.oeap.info)), and/or
  - c) School contact details for SLT on school site.
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.