A Christian Environment for Growing, Learning & Fun.

St. John's Church of England Primary School and Nursery

St. John's C of E (VC) Primary School and Nursery

Offsite Visits Policy

Manager: Mrs S Newton

Policy Produced following consultation with the following parties

Staff on 07.10.26

Curriculum Governors on 15.10.26

Policy review Date October 2028

This policy is to be used in conjunction with all other policies at St. John's C. of E. Primary School and Nursery

1. Introduction

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery acknowledges the immense value and many benefits of outdoor learning and is committed to supporting off-site visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of children and young people.

Our school (and any contracted external providers where an activity has been commissioned) works within the requirements set out in Derbyshire County Council's Offsite Visits and Adventure Activities Guidance and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (both accessible via EVOLVE).

This policy has been written in accordance with Derbyshire County Council's Offsite Visits Policy. All establishment staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

For all visits it is important that each person involved understands their specific roles and responsibilities as detailed in this section.

Employer: LA, via the School Visits Service for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools.

Under Health & Safety law the employer has primary responsibility for Health, Safety & Welfare of employees and students, this overall responsibility cannot be delegated. In establishments where the LA is not the employer the Governors or Management board will normally hold this responsibility and should be fully aware of the responsibility this entails.

The employer will ensure that its employees are provided with appropriate guidance, that there are training regimes in place to support it and that the guidance is understood.

The School Visits Service (SVS) team will provide Derbyshire County Council visit guidance. The SVS team has a huge breadth of knowledge and experience and can provide support with any visit from a walk to the park through to extended oversea expeditions.

SVS provides training courses for Educational Visits Coordinators (EVCs) and Visit Leaders. SVS monitors visits through EVOLVE and through sample monitoring 'in the field'.

Headteacher

The Headteacher, is responsible for ensuring off-site activities and visits comply with the LA Guidance and this Visit Policy and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the Establishment wishes to be associated.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (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.

The nominated deputy to approve offsite visits in the absence of the Headteacher is the Deputy Headteacher.

Educational Visit Co-ordinator

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 EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment.

The designated EVC is Mrs S Newton who received full training in the role on 2nd October 2026.

Visit Leader

Visit Leaders will have over-all charge of the visits they lead. They are also responsible for and must demonstrate the following;

- Competence, including where necessary verification, to lead the visit
- Awareness of potential hazards, dangers and competence when completing the necessary risk assessments and introducing measures to control risks to an acceptable level
- Informing the Headteacher of the identified risks
- Sound judgement of what constitutes a dangerous situation and preventing access to dangerous situations
- Ability to undertake dynamic risk assessments
- Arrangement of adequate supervision
- Knowledge of where to get information about the area they are travelling to which could include such things as tide tables and weather forecasts.
- Ensure relevant visit information is shared with parents/carers and informed consent is sought where necessary.

Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers will be appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

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

3. Procedures

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective Visit Leaders) will first seek permission from the Headteacher or EVC.

Finance

The Headteacher, EVC and Visit Leaders should take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act.

The establishment charging policy for off-site visits is: Charging and Remissions policy – maximum of £55 per year for all local visits excluding residential visits.

Staff Induction and Training

All new staff will as part of their induction into the establishment, be familiar with the local policy for off-site visits and activities and understand their role in managing, planning, leading or assisting with organising off-site visits. All staff will have access to County and National guidance.

The EVC will identify any specific training needs and requirements and ensure staff can access relevant learning and development opportunities as appropriate and as required by Derbyshire County Council School Visits Service.

Visit Approval

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery has adopted the Derbyshire County Council system for approval of visits which is based on these being categorised into three broad types:

1. Local low risk single day visits that are regular and routine

2. Day visits and programmes that require enhanced planning

3. Higher risk visits, further field that require detailed planning and leader competence

<u>Category 1</u>:

These visits will be regular, routine day activities that are organised in and around the locality, usually on foot.

Regularly repeated visits can be covered by a block annual consent subject to parents/carers being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal day.

Visits and activities included in this category for this establishment are:

- On-site activity (excluding adventurous activities and Forest School listed in category 3)

- Transporting young people between multi-site establishments or other local schools/venues

- Visits within one mile of the school setting on foot (St Peter's Church, local parks, local shops, The Memorial Gardens, King Street, Long Row, The Ritz Cinema and Belper Mill)

- Sports fixtures (involving transport)

- DCC Primary curriculum swimming programme at Belper Leisure Centre

These visits should be planned using the establishment All Visits risk assessment and with approval by the EVC and Head/Manager. Activities can be covered by an annual blanket parental consent.

Where there are local activities that are a planned part of the curriculum/routine programme but are dependent upon the right conditions on the day, then the visit leader will sign out before departure leaving relevant information with the base contact.

The specific establishment off-site All Visits Risk Assessment (that may also include road transport) covers general supervision of these visits. A review will be required rather than completed a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Notes form.

All other visits: All other visit must be planned and submitted using EVOLVE.

Based on the visit types, EVOLVE automatically directs the flow of approval for Category 2 and 3 visits.

Category 2:

These visits are single "one off" day visits or a programme of visits that take place off-site but further field than your base locality and with no element of adventurous activities (as defined in Category 3). These opportunities will usually require transport and could also require some enhanced planning and risk assessment.

Example visits are:

Visits requiring use of transport (urban areas, theatres, social events, places of interest)
Swimming in public lifeguarded pools (excluding open water)
Fieldwork visits (not in open/remote country)
Activities at Water Margins (coastal locations & inland waters)
Farm visits
Forest school programmes

These activities will be entered onto EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC **at least three school weeks prior to departure (not including school holidays)**. Approval is delegated to the headteacher and visits should be covered by a specific parental consent. Consent should be 'informed' consent.

For a programme of regular visits to similar destinations, one single visit form can be completed, with the relevant dates selected and can be covered by an annual blanket parental consent.

The specific establishment All Visits Risk Assessment (that also includes road transport) will cover general supervision of the visit. A review will be required rather than completed a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the Event Specific Note form.

If a visit is planned to a higher risk environment, the appropriate risk assessments must be completed for your specific visit. This will then be attached to the EVOLVE record, prior to submitting to your EVC and Headteacher for approval.

Certain activities will require staff to hold specific qualifications or competencies before being able to deliver sessions. e.g. forest school. Please refer to the activity qualification matrix for further information or contact SVS. Relevant qualifications will be added and uploaded to EVOLVE. These activities will not be undertaken unless there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff to deliver them.

Evolve: Category 2 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk assessment / Care Plan

Category 3:

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 after first being checked by Mrs S Newton (EVC) and authorised by the Headteacher **at least four school weeks prior to departure (not including school holidays)**. Specific informed consent will be required for each visit.

Overseas visits and D of E expeditions will be submitted to the LA **four working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and before anyone is financially committed.

Other visits requiring LA approval require two working weeks notice. Approval notification via email will automatically be sent out (from EVOLVE) as soon as possible up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

A member of staff intending to lead an adventurous activity, must be specifically approved by the LA to do so via the EVOLVE Leader Approval Request function.

When external providers are used it is a requirement for their safety management to have been verified either by completion and return of a Provider Form or verified by holding an appropriate national accreditation e.g. AALA licence, Learning Outside The Classroom Quality Badge (LOTC). Providers will not be used until they have been 'vetted' by the LA.

Evolve: Category 3 minimum document uploads

- Itinerary
- All Visit Risk Assessment
- Specific Risk assessment: e.g. Activity, Transport, Residential, Oversea, Care plan etc.

See Category 3 visit appendix 1 at end of the policy.

4. Risk Management

The risk management of an activity is normally carried out by visit leader and assistants with the support of EVCs as required. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, but not necessarily eliminated.
Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery applies 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 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.

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery staff will adopt and adapt the risk management materials available through EVOLVE to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of educational visit learning opportunities.

A copy of the establishment generic visits risk assessment is located in the EVOLVE resources library and blank copy of the Event Specific Notes form can be downloaded from Evolve.

5. Monitoring

To ensure policy and procedures are being followed the Headteacher will undertake monitoring of off-site visits. SVS will provide sample monitoring of visits 'in the field'.

6. Insurance

Appropriate insurance must be in place for all visits.

The responsibility for arranging adequate insurance cover rests with the Headteacher in conjunction with the organiser of each journey.

For visits abroad, additional journey insurance **must** be taken out.

As an employer, in addition to the standard public liability cover which all establishments will have in place, Derbyshire County Council offers LA Schools the opportunity to buy into an annual 'blanket' personal accident cover / travel insurance, covering any off-site activities and overseas travel ventures.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, Headteacher and EVC to determine whether any additional insurance should be taken out.

Academies and other non-school based establishments must make their own insurance arrangements.

Insurance in St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery is provided by Derbyshire County Council, certificate number 8559

7. Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to treat a young person less favourably and/or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery endorses the principles of:

- a presumption of entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaption or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Adjustments made to include a disabled child or young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence.

Behaviour

St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery encourage the use of codes of behaviour conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of young person's behaviour. Such codes will be explained to both young people and those with parental authority prior to a visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where a code is breached.

Whilst inclusion of young people and adults on offsite visits will be the norm at St John's Primary School & Nursery, this will not be the case where health and safety of the individual or other group members would be significantly compromised. Visit Leaders will ensure that they consult the LA and parents well in advance of the visit where inclusion is an issue.

See category 3 visit appendix 1 at end of policy.

8. Evaluation

Visit leaders must have a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they hope to achieve. Outdoor learning, off site visits and activities have the potential to deliver a very wide range of benefits and outcomes, these should be prioritised and recorded on EVOLVE.

For a positive safety culture to exist and develop, learning from past experience, incidents and mistakes is a crucial component in any safety system. A review/evaluation of the safety management of all of the *St John's C of E Primary School & Nursery* educational visits by the Visit Leaders on a visit basis will take place.

This should include a review of incidents, near-misses and accidents.

9. Emergency Procedures

The risk management for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit. For any off-site visit a home contact will be designating by the establishment who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents/carers, the establishment and the County Council in the event of an emergency. The home contact must be an employee, be unrelated to anyone attending the visit and be confident in providing support in a crisis.

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed Emergency Card for Visit Leaders (or equivalent) must be with the Visit Leader at all times
- A completed Emergency Action Card (or equivalent) must be with the emergency home contact(s) at all times, where access to EVOLVE is not possible.
- A First Contact Emergency Action Card can be used when taking an initial a call from a Visit Leader in an emergency.

In the event of a delay in returning (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the establishment 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. If the incident is very serious to contact Derbyshire County Council using the emergency contact phone number and details given overleaf:

The emergency contact phone number for Derbyshire County Council during office hours is 00-44-1629-538364 or outside office hours 00-44-1629-533085. Upon connection, please ask for the Emergency Planning Duty Officer. Please note that calls to the numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

10. Accident Reporting

All accidents will be handled in line with Derbyshire's County Council's Accident Reporting Procedures.

Academies must ensure they have equivalent procedures to meet the requirements of the law and good practice.

Where an incident or accident occurs on an activity led by a Provider, please ensure this is reported to the LA Visits Team.

Chair of Governors

Signature: ……

Name: ……

Date: ……..

Headteacher

Signature: ……

Name: ……

Date: ……..

Appendix 1 – Category 3 visit extra information

1. Staff at St. John's voluntarily give many hours every year to ensure that children get two opportunities to enjoy a category three residential visit.

a. In year 5 all children are invited to a two-night residential at Lea Green residential Centre. In year 6 all children are invited to a two-night residential at White Hall residential centre. Both are in Derbyshire.

2. Unlike category one and two visits that take place during the school day and are used to support the teaching of the national curriculum these residential visits take place outside of the school day and are offered to children to help enhance their experiences at school. Children that are not able to travel, due to any reason, and remain in school will still be able to access the full national curriculum.

3. Examples of the reasons that children may not choose or be able to travel on a category three level residential visit are given below.

a. Family choice.
b. Cost of visit
c. Injury or illness of child
d. Nervous children or parents
e. Medical reasons (for example bed wetting)

In all of these situations school will try to work with the family to ensure that children can travel happily and safely and have successfully done so on many occasions. For example,

- we provide significant financial help for benefit related free school meal children and reduce the cost of travel by 75%
- we individually risk assess the visit for children with unique needs and work with the excellent staff at White Hall and Lea Green to give every child the opportunity to travel and enjoy the experiences with their friends. We have many examples and lots of experience of successfully doing this for many children.

Families in a position of potentially not travelling on the residential visits, due to reasons such as those listed above are to let school know as soon as possible once the initial letter has gone home. The more time we have, to try to help your child happily and safely travel the better.

4. The Inclusion section (Section 7) in this policy refers to the behaviour expectations of children to ensure that everyone can safely travel. All children will initially be invited to attend category three residential visits, however, if during the planning for the visit a child's behaviour in school or at home shows that there are safety concerns the school will not allow the child to travel. Examples of such behaviours may include

a. Violence towards anyone.
b. Lack of respect for staff and refusal to follow instructions when asked.
c. Poor attendance at school resulting in no positive relationships with staff.
d. Running away from adults

As soon as school is concerned about the behaviour of a child and the risk of safely taking them on the residential visit the family will be contacted and invited to a meeting. At this meeting the school will set out the concerns and set targets that the child will need to achieve to show that they can safely travel. These may include going on a pre-exclusion behaviour plan (see stage 4 of school's Behaviour Management Policy) and having targets set that need to show improved behaviours.

5. Costs and any potential refunds of category three residential visits. School does not charge any money to cover the administration costs of offering the residential visits The costs for the residential visits covers transport, venue costs (including meals and activities) and insurance.

   Potential refunds

a. The initial letter sent to families inviting their child on the visit will have information about payment dates. Families need to ensure that they have paid money in accordance with these dates. Failure to do so will probably result in your child not travelling and you not receiving any refunds of any money paid to date. If you are unable to meet a payment date, please let school know before the day so that a potential extension can be explored.
b. Children that become ill or injured prior to travelling may be able to claim a refund through the school's insurance. Please contact the school if your child becomes ill or injured prior to the visit so that we can make a claim.
c. Parents that change their mind and no longer want their child to travel will not be able to receive a refund of any costs incurred by school, for example, transport costs or of any money paid or committed to the residential centre or any third parties.
d. Children that are not able to travel due to poor behaviour will not be able to receive a refund of any costs incurred by school, for example, transport costs or of any money paid or committed to the residential centre or any third parties.

   Governors are made aware of all cases where children aren't able to travel and of any insurance claims or refunds school is able or not able to give.

6. Parental and carer support during the residential.

a. There may be circumstances where we ask for parental support during a residential visit. For example,
   i. If a child becomes ill during the visit and needs to go home
   ii. If the child misbehaves during the visit and puts themselves or others at risk and need to be collected.
b. Part of the residential experience is for the child to develop independence and therefore we do not ask for parental support or invite parents to join children in the residential visits.