

OUTDOOR LEARNING & EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

St. John's Catholic Comprehensive School



*Excellence for All
Service to Others
Inspired by Christ*

Date of last review:	September 2026	Date of next review:	September 2027
Author:	Senior Assistant Headteacher responsible for Catholic Life	Owner:	Headteacher
Approval:	Full Governing Body Panel		

Introduction

The value of outdoor learning and educational visits are widely recognised as an important tool for supporting the education and development of children and young people, providing direct curriculum-linked activities to improve learning, skills, understanding and activity opportunities to enhance PE and extra- curricular activities. They also provide a wide range of personal development opportunities to support the development of real-life skills.

“Learning outside the classroom contributed significantly to raising standards and improving pupils’ personal, social and emotional development.”

Ofsted – Learning Outside of the Classroom report

“It has long been acknowledged that pupils can derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with their schools. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom.”

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits – Department for Education and Skills, 1998

“Outdoor learning supports academic achievement, for example through fieldwork projects, as well as the development of ‘soft’ skills and social skills, particularly in hard-to-reach children. It can take place on school trips, on visits in the local community or in the school grounds.”

House of Commons Education and Skills Select Committee, February 2005

St John’s Catholic Comprehensive School strongly believes in the benefits of well planned, high quality outdoor learning and educational visits and encourages opportunities for all pupils to experience visits and outdoor activities using a range of environments, geographical, cultural and historical sites and activities to support their curriculum.

Statement of Intent:

The Headteacher and Governors are committed to establishing and implementing arrangements that will ensure:

- Visits and activities are planned to ensure the safety of pupils, staff and volunteer helpers - including appropriate risk management and assessment that is specific to the needs of the group, the planned activity and the location and environment. This includes any significant risk assessment information being communicated with those attending the visit as appropriate.
- The management of overall visit and activity planning, risk assessment and the visit approval process is carried out by a competent staff member with appropriate experience and training; an **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** and will be nominated to carry out this role and they will attend an EVC training course, and an EVC update course every 3 years. Educational visit will be approved on behalf of the Headteacher, by an SLT member – at present this is Bryan Smith, Assistant Headteacher.
- Visits and activities are planned with clear educational aims and objectives, based on pupils' needs and abilities, to support high quality learning outcomes.
- Visits and activities are planned and led by competent members of school or establishment staff, with appropriate qualifications and experience as required by the activities.
- Appropriate technical expertise is sought in relation to the planning and management of more hazardous or adventurous activities, including the verification of activity leader qualifications, safe activity management, appropriate ratios, etc.
- External providers used to provide services and support, are appropriately checked to ensure they are suitable for use on educational visits e.g., meeting nationally accepted standards and legal adventurous activity requirements (e.g., Adventurous Activities Licence), have appropriate financial protections in place (e.g., ATOL), etc as appropriate; and hold an appropriate level of Public Liability Insurance for the activities or services provided.
- Appropriate emergency and serious incident procedures are in place to manage accidents, incidents and safeguarding issues, and visit information can be easily accessed by all those who need it in an emergency situation (this may be overnight, at weekend or during holiday periods). All staff and volunteers involved with these visits should receive appropriate training and briefings on dealing with emergencies.
- Information and documents relating to educational visits are appropriately stored and retained, in line with data protection and document retention requirements, to support incident management and potential investigations / court proceedings after serious incidents and accidents.
- All school and establishment staff are appropriately trained for their roles in leading and accompanying educational visits and activities.

Educational visit process

- All visits and activities are formally approved by the AHT (Bryan Smith) on behalf of the Headteacher as the school Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). Approval systems are clearly evidenced and involve school Governors as appropriate using the school trip form and EVOLVE..
- Informed activity and medical consent is obtained from parents / guardians as appropriate for the type of visit or activity, Parents / Guardians are given enough information to be 'fully informed' about all educational visit activity plans. No child attends a visit without the permission of their parent or Guardian.
- Full medical information and details of other issues such as behaviour, special needs, dietary requirements, etc will be obtained from parents and available to visit leaders and accompanying school or establishment staff.
- For each educational visit, a staff member will have a school mobile phone for emergencies. Each visit will allocate a Qualified first aider or staff with a basic working knowledge of first aid. All school minibuses drivers are first aid trained.

USE OF EVOLVE

Scheme of Delegation for the Management of Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities

From 1 September 2017, all maintained schools and establishments were given the responsibility for approving their own educational visits and activities, including residential and adventurous activities. Kent County Council (KCC) provides all schools with a Kent Framework for Safe Practice on Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities to support and guide schools in the safe planning and management of outdoor learning activities and educational visits.

The EVOLVE system provides a powerful and easy to use tool for Headteachers and EVCs to use to reduce the workload and administration of visit management. The system provides a comprehensive tool to evidence good planning and practice on educational visits and activities, covering all aspects of visit management from staffing to risk management in an online tool, as well as for reporting on and evaluation of visits.

KCC monitor compliance with the scheme of delegation and adherence to the Kent Framework for Safe Practice on Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities.

All information is held securely on this site in line with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) regulations.

Appropriate expertise through the EVOLVE team is sought in relation to the planning and management of more hazardous or adventurous activities, including the verification of activity leader qualifications, safe activity management, appropriate ratios etc.

At St John's Catholic Comprehensive School, the residential visits are planned by the school staff and advice/approval/advice are requested, from the EVOLVE team.

External providers are listed as approved on the EVOLVE system used to provide services and support, are appropriately checked to ensure they are suitable for use on educational visits e.g., meeting nationally accepted standards and legal adventurous activity requirements (e.g., Adventurous Activities Licence), have appropriate financial protections in place (e.g., ATOL) as

appropriate; and hold an appropriate level of Public Liability Insurance for the activities or services provided.

At St John's Catholic Comprehensive School, trip venues are checked and approved by the EVOLVE team and the school. Information and documents relating to educational visits are appropriately stored and retained, in line with GDPR and document retention requirements, to support incident management and potential investigations/court proceedings after serious incidents and accidents. Information and documents are held on the EVOLVE system and in secure folders in school.

Trip group leaders are responsible for ensuring that on the trip they carry students consent forms with medical details & parental contact numbers; and medical care plans held for students participating in the visit.

The school uses the EVOLVE system to record all residential, out of county and adventurous activity trips.

Residential trips are approved by the EVOLVE team, Headteacher and/or delegated SLT member and school governors.

The KCC outdoor education team give final approve to residential trips. KCC retains its legal health and safety responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work Act as the ultimate employer of staff.

KCC delegates the responsibility for the safe planning and management of outdoor learning and educational visits, including residential and adventurous / more hazardous activities, to the Governing Bodies of maintained schools and Management Committees of Pupil Referral Units.

KCC provides all schools with a **Kent Framework for Safe Practice on Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities** to support and guide schools in the safe planning and management of outdoor learning activities and educational visits. The **Kent Framework for Safe Practice on Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities** can be found here:

<https://www.theeducationpeople.org/our-expertise/outdoor-learning>

Useful Information and Resources

- **Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for Educational Visits and Activities** – <http://oeapng.info/>
- **DfE Guidance on the Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits** - <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/health-and-safety-guidance/curriculum-topics>
- **Guidance on First Aid for Schools – A Good Practice Guide Managing Medicines in Schools and Early Years Settings** - <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/health-and-safety-guidance/risk-assessment>
- **KCC Incident/Accident Reporting** - <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/health-and-safety-guidance/accident-reporting>
- **KCC Health and Safety Inspection Proforma** - <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/policies-and-guidance/health-and-safety-guidance/management-of-health-safety>

Useful Contacts

- **KCC Health and Safety Unit**
Health and Safety Advice Line: **Tel:** 03000 418456 / **Email:** HealthandSafety@kent.gov.uk
Location: Room 3.32 Sessions House, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ
- **The Outdoor Education Advisory Service**
Tel: 03000 416539 / **Email:** outdoor.education@kent.gov.uk
Location: The Swattenden Outdoor Centre, Swattenden Lane, Cranbrook, TN17 3PS
- **KCC Insurance and Risk Management**
Tel: 03000 416440 / **Email:** insurance@kent.gov.uk
Location: Room 2.53 Sessions House, Maidstone, ME14 1XQ
- **Health and Safety Executive (HSE)**
Enforcement of Health and Safety Legislation. - <https://extranet.hse.gov.uk/lfserver/external/F25081E>
Tel: 0845 345 0055 online reporting.