

Educational Visits Policy

1. Introduction

The Creative Education Trust believes 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 our schools 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:

- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Opportunities for meaning making, 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 participants 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. i.e. 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.

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, Wroughton Academies will adopt National Guidance www.oeapng.info and use EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All Creative Education Trust schools will use the EVOLVE system. Each school is required to appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC).

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance and to use EVOLVE.

2. Types of visit and approval

There are two 'types' of visit:

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 or Principal for approval.

Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.

These must follow national guidance and be processed through EVOLVE.

3. 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 Headteacher or Principal and/or the 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 responsibility for the organisation of all trips and visits is the responsibility of the Visit or Trip leader and the responsibility for overseeing that all off site visits meet with guidelines and this policy is delegated to the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who will in turn keep appropriate documentation records of all off-site activities.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom 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 or Principal. Typically, the EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE and will upload generic school documents.

The Headteacher or Principal has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting those that are overseas, residential or adventurous to the Trust (to the Director of Estates and Facilities) for acknowledgement and approval.

The Trust is ultimately responsible for the final approval of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

4. 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:

- By working 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 Headteacher or Principal will consider 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.

5. 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 1). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually 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 appropriate Critical Incident plans will be used, and contacts notified.

6. Educational Visits Checklist and planning

Using the Educational Visits Checklist is an important part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities and may be downloaded from EVOLVE. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'.

All staff can use the EVOLVE programme for planning and managing educational visits even regular features such as after school clubs and sports fixtures which occur away from school premises.

For all school visits there must be a designated safeguarding officer on call and a member of SLT on call as well as 24-hour communication access with the EVC.

Every trip has a nominated trip leader who takes full responsibility for ensuring the trip is organised in line guidance and with this policy.

Staffing ratio should be checked against guidance as part of the EVOLVE process. OEAP provides useful suggested ratios for age groups, however, each visit requires an appropriate risk assessment.

Guidance issued by the government in 1998 suggested the following 'starting points' for consideration of staffing ratios. These were intended as a general guide only;

- One adult for every 6 pupils in school years 1 to 3 (Nursery and under-5s reception classes should have higher ratios).
- One adult for every 10-15 pupils in years 4 to 6.
- One adult for every 15-20 pupils for year 7 onwards.

Ratios for trips are as typically as follows;

- Day trip where the trip is considered unadventurous or a trip not taking place in a major UK city the ratio of 1:20 can be applied.
- Residential trip, adventurous or taking part in a major UK city the ratio of 1:10 will be applied.

Changes to these ratios can only be considered after completing a specific risk assessment focusing on trip leaders experience, student age, behaviour, ability and medical needs, the activity, mode of travel and any additional information sort by the EVC's.

For the Headteacher or Principal to provide comprehensive support to staff for student suitability for day trips and residential trips, the trip leader will be required to submit a listing of students to EVC to enable suitability checks for student participation.

All off-site activities require final approval permission from the Headteacher or Principal. In relation to Residential trips, Adventure trips or even taking place in a major UK city, robust approval processes are used on EVOLVE.

Trip Leaders will likely identify suitable staff to assist with trips and these will require Headteacher or Principal approval.

During the trip the Trip Leader has the responsibility for the Health and Safety of all staff and students and for decision making in case of an emergency. The Trip Leader is also responsible for ensuring the planned activities are identified through EVOLVE. These will not be amended, changed or added to without actioning through EVOLVE.

All trips are carefully planned with due regard to health and safety. Where trips are organised through a travel agent or expert company which organises all the transport and accommodation, only recognised and reliable companies are used and staff must ensure that the tour company has relevant memberships to ABTA, ATOL as well as membership to the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. Research of the provider is expected as part of the risk assessment process. Trip Leaders can use bodies such as the School Travel Forum to ensure potential tour operators are credible and meet the required standards.

When the trip is organised in-house, careful guidelines are followed regarding modes of transport, such as road/rail and all other aspects of the planned off-site trips. The EVC must be kept informed at all planning stages to discuss potential concerns early in the planning stages.

7. Parent/carer consent

Residential trips (or day trips with any degree of risk involved) require trip-specific consent forms. These forms also include emergency contact numbers for parents (or parentally nominated alternates) during the trip as well as student updated physical illnesses/conditions and mental conditions

Pupils may not travel on any off-site trip without the necessary parent consent form being completed.

Parents and carers are always informed in writing of the arrangements for any trip their child is involved in and are always provided with an emergency school contact number for use whilst the trip is in progress as identified on the 'EVOLVE' form, this will usually be one of the EVC's.

For overseas/residential trips the trip leader must always organise a Parents' meeting in addition to any paper communication. At this meeting, details about the trip are outlined and parents can ask questions.

The trip leader is responsible for checking the medical details on school MIS of all pupils travelling on all offsite trips. Some students will require an individual risk assessment which are produced by the EVC or other competent person relating to risk assessments.

All staff supporting a school trip will be expected to attend all parent meetings and staff briefing meetings. For residential trips this is an essential part of the organisation as parents and carers feel reassured that they can talk to the staff looking after their children whilst they're away. This will also provide invaluable support for the trip leader and give important information relating to parent/student concerns which have not been identified beforehand. Additional personal information may require an individual specific risk assessment to be completed as a result of students updated physical illnesses/conditions and mental conditions.

8. First Aid

First aid equipment is always carried on every trip. Wherever possible one of the accompanying staff is a qualified first aider.

The trip leader always has an emergency contact phone number back at school for use if required during the trip. This will normally be nominated key contacts such as the EVC. Overseas or complex trips will require contact detailed for the Trust also. This is likely to be the Director of Estates and Facilities 07894535038.

9. Identification

Pupils on trips should be easily identifiable and this may mean wearing badges, lanyards or other means of quick identification. Whilst this is not always required it is desirable.

Residential trips UK or overseas will require student specific ID cards being issued, which must include the following details – student name, accommodation address and contact number, trip mobile number, UK EVC base contact number, all telephone numbers must be identified by the correct local and international dialling code. Additional information to be carried by students may include suitable wording asking for assistance in the local language along with any specific medical information.

10. Risk assessments

The trip leader is responsible for completing all trip specific risk assessments. These are normally completed online using EVOLVE but can be completed in hard copy form. All completed risk assessments must be sent to the EVC to ensure all risks have been identified and enough control measures identified and implemented. All approved risk assessments should be discussed with all staff travelling with the party and hard copies signed by all staff attending to ensure they are fully aware of the risks and controls. The completed and signed for risk assessments must be submitted to the EVC before departure. The EVC will assist trip leaders to complete specific risk assessments if required.

11. Insurance

All off site trips must have appropriate insurance to cover all the students and staff and in the context of the trip. Where adventurous activities are concerned such as water activities and winter sports additional insurance will need to be taken out to cover activities.

Pre-existing conditions including both physical illnesses/conditions and mental conditions including: Anxiety, Stress, Depression, any phobias and any mental or nervous disorder including anorexia can be covered by off-site trip insurance, but full disclosure of individual physical illness/conditions and mental conditions will be required to any supplemented insurance policies.

It may be necessary for the parents to get a letter from the pupil's GP/consultant/medical specialist confirming it is safe for them to go on the trip and take part in all or specific activities, or it may be necessary for the parents to take out their own insurance. Some students will not be permitted to undertake certain activities on a trip as a result of physical illnesses/conditions and mental conditions as identified by student parents/students GP/consultant/medical specialist or as a result of an individual risk assessment and it's the responsibility of the trip leader to ensure the restrictions and advice is adhered to.

12. Pastoral responsibilities

All members of staff on a residential trip have a duty of care to look after the students. This includes travel to and from venues where the students should be supervised by all travelling members of staff. All staff attending an offsite visit will be responsible for ensuring high standards of pupil behaviour. Pupils are briefed before a trip and on frequent occasions during a trip.

The trip leader may split the students into sub-groups and assign a member of staff to each group. This gives the students a first point of contact and is useful for spreading out the tasks such as collection of passports, staff acting in coordinating roles.

Staff should make every effort to familiarise themselves with the students in their group before departure and should be prepared to step in to support other groups when necessary.

13. Contingency Funds

Even with the best planning, residential trips do present unexpected costs from time to time. It is therefore acceptable to add a surplus to the cost quoted by the tour company to the student's balance. This should be a common-sense figure and the trip leader needs to bear in mind that any surplus left at the end of the trip needs to be returned to the parents.

14. Staff Food and Drink

Under normal circumstances, accommodation, breakfast, lunch and evening meal should be factored into the student balance or paid for out of the contingency fund by the party leader. This includes non-alcoholic drinks with meals.

15. Staff /Students & Alcohol

It should be noted that it is a potential disciplinary offence for a teacher to be at work (as they are when accompanying a school trip) when affected by drink (even if not 'drunk' in the everyday sense of the word) or indeed by other substances which may affect their judgement and behaviour (other than those medically prescribed and of which the school is aware) because being in such a state potentially puts pupils and colleagues at risk and may also undermine discipline and good order and perhaps bring the school into disrepute.

Therefore, there is a strict policy of zero alcohol consumption for staff and students throughout the entire off-site trip.

16. Telephone calls

Staff who need to make or receive frequent business calls when out of the office or outside normal working hours can be provided with a school mobile telephone. This should be used for business calls only. Students should not have access to staff personal numbers and staff are not permitted to give parents their personal mobile numbers. Parents are to be instructed to use the UK contact details as identified in the parent meetings/letter prior to trip departure.

17. General

The same level of professionalism should be adopted on a residential trip as in day to day school life. Punctuality is essential for the smooth running of a trip from both students and staff.

Roles and responsibilities for staff should be clearly defined before the day of departure. This should be carried out in a meeting led by the trip leader.

All staff on the trip should have an input into the risk assessment after the initial

Appendix 1 – 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 always be able to contact an experienced senior manager.
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 school/Trust if 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 the visit leader will carry either:
 - a) An Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources), or
 - b) An OEAP National Guidance Emergency action card (*Available via www.oeap.info*)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.