



ST BERNADETTE'S
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Educational Visits Policy

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School

Approved by BoD: 14/03/2026
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Mission Statement

At St Bernadette's, we follow Jesus by sharing His light through our words and actions, spreading His word in how we live and learn, trusting His plan even when the path is uncertain, loving one another with compassion and respect, and serving others with humility, just as Christ did. Through these daily acts of faith and kindness, we grow together as a community of disciples.

St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a broad, balanced curriculum for all children, and outdoor learning and educational visits is a key feature of our provision. We are committed to providing inspirational, real-world educational experiences for our children through visits and visitors to enrich and enhance their learning experiences, deepen knowledge and understanding and increase skills and confidence.

This Policy will set out the key procedures that need to be followed when planning and undertaking outdoor learning and educational visits, in order to ensure they are not only worthwhile learning experiences, but also undertaken in a safe and responsible manner.

Intention:

It is our intention at St. Bernadette's Catholic Primary School to provide all children with the experiences that they are entitled to, by giving them a broad and balanced curriculum, where experiences are creative and relevant. Our educational visits aim to bring learning to life for all children and provide them with long lasting knowledge and skills. It aims to provide children with experiences that they will not get in the classroom and open their eyes to the world that they live in and potential career paths. At St. Bernadette's we provide all children with an equal opportunity to take part in educational visits and outdoor learning, within the local area and off-site, including residential visits.

Scope and Remit

'The OEAP National Guidance document: 1c "Status and Remit and Rationale"
<https://oeapng.info/download/1046/> clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance.

In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal classroom or environment; Page 8 of 22
- Direct supervision of children and young people undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of learning outside the classroom;

- Facilitating experiences for children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal classroom or environment;
- Deploying staff who will supervise or facilitate experiences for children and young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal environment;
- This guidance may be applicable for all those supervising vulnerable adults as there is a transfer of good practice for the wider use of educational visits. This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods. For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the OEAP National Guidance documents:

3.2a "Underpinning Legal Framework and Duty of Care"

<https://oeapng.info/download/1078/>

3.1a "Requirements and Recommendations for Employers"

<https://oeapng.info/download/1074/>

Definition

This Educational Visits Policy refers to all activities that take place outdoors, on-site and offsite, including residential at home and abroad.

Educational visits, including residential visits, provide a context for learning, requiring children to use their skills, knowledge and understanding in real, and often complex, situations; this helps them understand and remember what they are learning about in a meaningful way and brings the curriculum to life.

We believe that there are several key outcomes from high quality outdoor education (in line with OEAP guidance):

- **Enjoyment and fulfilment:** children enjoy participating and adopt a positive attitude to challenge and adventure.
- **Confidence:** children gain personal confidence and self-esteem
- **Social awareness:** children develop their self-awareness and social skills; they appreciate the contributions and achievements of themselves and others.
- **Environmental awareness:** children become alive to the environment, natural and man-made, in which they live, and understand important concepts including sustainable development and conservation.
- **Activity skills:** young people have the opportunity of developing a range of skills.
- **Personal qualities:** children demonstrate increased initiative, self-reliance, responsibility, independence, perseverance and commitment.

- **Key skills:** children develop and extend their skills of communication, problem solving, leadership and teamwork.
- **Health and fitness:** children learn to appreciate the benefits of physical exercise and activity and the lifelong value of participation in leisure activities
- **Motivation for learning:** children display an increased motivation and appetite for learning that contributes to raised levels of attainment and achievement in other aspects of their education
- **Broadening horizons:** children broaden their experiences and become open to a wider range of opportunities and life chances.

EMPLOYER'S POLICY

Walsall Council is classified as the 'Employer'. This Policy should be read alongside Walsall Council's Policy and Guidance. We also follow OEAP National Guidance, which can be found following this link: <http://oeapng.info/>

School Staff should follow all these Policies when planning outdoor learning or educational visits, alongside the guidance in this document. Any clarification needs to be sought from the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in School.

Anybody involved in educational visits and learning outside the classroom is strongly advised to read Walsall Council's Policy and Guidance before seeking information from the <https://oeapng.info> website. It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their Employer's Policy and Guidance.

ROLES IN SCHOOL

Governors

Governors should provide support and challenge to ensure that:

- School Policy is up to date and effective.
- Training is up to date.
- The Policy complies with Walsall Council's Policy and Guidance and that the School adheres to this Policy and Guidance.
- Where approval for visits is delegated to the Head Teacher and/or Educational Visits Coordinator that risk assessments are in place and effective.

Head Teacher

The Head Teacher will ensure that:

- Walsall Council's Policy and Guidance is adhered to at all times.

- The School Policy is up to date and effective.
- Visits comply with guidance and are notified and submitted in advance.
- Risk assessments and suitable safeguarding arrangements are in place (including DBS checks); that these are proportionate.
- EVC and staff training is up to date and effective.
- Staff leading visits are competent and experienced, and are clear about their role and that of any accompanying adults, including volunteers.
- Arrangements for medical needs and any other inclusion considerations have been met.
- Transport and insurance arrangements are appropriate and meet requirements.
- Where the activity or visit involves a third-party provider: appropriate checks have been made and assurances obtained; a clear contract is in place setting out what the contractor is to provide; the provider holds sufficient indemnity insurance.
- Emergency procedures and contacts are clear and in place.
- Where charges are made, these are within legal and employer requirements; procedures are in place to account for finance of activities and visits.
- Serious incidents are reported to Walsall Council as required by their guidance.
- Governing Body are kept up to date of Policy and Procedures and visits taking place.

Educational Visits Coordinator

The Educational Visits Coordinator will:

- Be appointed by the Head Teacher. If one has not been appointed, this role then becomes the responsibility of the Head Teacher.
- Have appropriate training to fulfil the role (renewed every 3 years), and have experience of leading educational visits.
- Keep the Policy and Guidance up to date.
- Support staff; be involved in the planning and management of visits, and monitor planning and delivery of visits; evaluate visits with staff.
- Oversee the necessary paperwork and risk assessments, ensuring they meet guidance requirements; will maintain records of visits.
- Ensure the DFE and Walsall Council guidance is adhered to, and keep abreast of advice from OEAP.

- Ensure medical and first aid issues are addressed.
- Ensure emergency procedures are in place, clear to all staff, and adhered to.

Teachers/Visit Leaders

Visit Leaders will:

- Seek approval to carry out the visit.
- Be responsible for planning, organisation and management of visits in line with School and Walsall Council Policy, in liaison with the Educational Visits Coordinator, including defining the roles of the other adults; provide necessary information to supporting adults.
- Organise transport in accordance with Walsall Council requirements, if appropriate, in liaison with the School Office staff.
- Organise letters to parents/carers and ensure suitable consent has been sought from parents/carers, including emergency contact and medical requirements etc, in liaison with the School Office staff.
- Where possible, undertake a pre-visit to the venue; ensure necessary insurance and health and safety requirements are adhered to; ensure child protection and first aid requirements are in place.
- Develop the risk assessment, in liaison with the Educational Visits Coordinator; this may include generic risk assessments and should always include points specific to the activity being planned; ensure risk assessments are understood by all adults on the visit. Where possible involve the children in risk assessments, e.g. when discussing how they are expected to behave on the bus, crossing roads, etc.
- Keep a register of all adults and children who attended, in order to follow checking in and out procedures.
- Report any accidents, incidents or near misses.
- Evaluate visits.
- When working with third-party activity providers it is imperative that leaders avoid 'grey areas', so there should be a clear handover before and after any activity led by provider.
- Should a provider run an activity in a way that causes concern, stop/consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention should be done with sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk.

Helpers/Volunteers

Helpers/Volunteers will be:

- Subject to an appropriate vetting and DBS checks, with a decision made by the Head Teacher.
- Used appropriately and not used to replace a visit leader.
- Suitably competent and confident to be able to carry out the duties they are assigned.
- Confident in their understanding of the role and responsibilities that they have been assigned and how these integrate with other staff.
- Enabled to contribute to the evaluation of all aspects of the visit.
- Appropriately briefed on: - Relevant establishment and visit procedures. - Group characteristics, including age, health, capabilities, special educational needs, behaviour and any other relevant matters in the - context of the visit. - Nature and location of the activity.

Where the helper is a parent/carer (or otherwise in a close relationship with a young person taking part in the visit), they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise group management, particularly if there is a serious incident. There is a probability that the helper may be distracted by the needs of their own child, rather than looking to the needs of the whole group. This means that the Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the risk-benefit assessment and not assign a helper to a leadership role which gives them a direct responsibility for their own child, other than where this is a risk managed part of the visit plan.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers will be:

- Kept up to date with the Policy (this is available on school website).
- Kept fully informed of all trips and visits. Information will include:
 - date, timings and venue
 - reason for visit
 - method of transport, if required - emergency contact
 - charges/voluntary contributions

- clothing/footwear needed
- money, food etc arrangements

PROCEDURES FOR ORGANISING VISITS AND APPROVAL

When planning a visit staff need to:

- Seek approval for the visit from the Head Teacher/Educational Visits Co-ordinator, having gathered all relevant information regarding arrangements, activities, risk assessments of establishment (if relevant), costs, and transport arrangements. Parent/carer transport is not used, other than to sporting events, and then parents/carers may only transport their own children. Any staff using their own vehicles will be covered with suitable insurance.
- Undertake a pre-visit, if possible and appropriate.
- Ensure risk assessments are completed: these will be done with the EVC. Generic risk assessments are in place for a range of activities, including use of transport, local walks, and in planning the visit these should be reviewed for any activity-specific information to be added. These should be kept with the group leader.
- Seek parental consent, if required. General consent should be found in pupil planners and cover a range of visits, including local walks, sporting events, school trips (other than residential). Gather any relevant information about medical needs, SEND, etc
- Submit the risk assessments and planning for the visit, from the EVC and Head Teacher. This must be done **2 weeks** prior to the visit (at **least 4 weeks** prior for overnight stays and adventurous activities).
- Ensure first aid and medical requirements are planned for.
- Understand the emergency procedures.
- Ensure adequate supervision is organised (see below).
- Ensure all accompanying adults, including staff and volunteers, have a clear plan of the activity and are clear on their responsibilities; they should know what to do in case of an emergency, and what the risk assessments are; they should have a register/list of their group members and regularly undertake headcounts; they should have a means to contact the visit leader, if required.
- Ensure catering staff are informed in advance if packed lunches are required.
- Monitor the progress of the visit throughout, ensuring all activities and procedures are taking place as planned and continuously assessing possible risks throughout the visit.

- Evaluate the activity afterwards with the EVC.
- Ensure paperwork is completed in case of any near misses or accidents, and that all parties are informed.

Supervision Ratios

Young people must be supervised at all times and the group leader is responsible for the group at all times. The following ratios are a **guide only**; each activity should be assessed individually for suitable supervision; off-site venues may also have their own supervision requirements. A professional judgement about supervision ratios should be made alongside the EVC/Headteacher.

Low Risk Activities (where the risk is similar to everyday life)

- EYFS - one adult to every 4-6 pupils
- Key Stage 1 - one adult to every 4-6 pupils
- Key Stage 2 - one adult to every 10 pupils

High Risk (adventurous, residential)

- Key Stage 1 - one adult to every 2 pupils
- Key Stage 2 - one adult to every 6-10 pupils

Local visits eg. Walking to St. Bernadette's Church - minimum of 3 adults per class.

Visits not in the local area - minimum of 4 adults per class.

MONITORING and RECORD KEEPING

- The Policy and Guidelines will be regularly reviewed by the Head Teacher and Governing Body.
- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will monitor visits through co-ordination with Visit Leaders.
- Records of **ALL** visits will be kept.
- All visits will be recorded in the school diary.
- Parents will be informed of these visits in advance via a letter. Additional consent will be given via SchoolComms upon parents/carers paying the visit costs.

INDUCTION AND TRAINING

- The Educational Visits Co-ordinator will keep their training up to date and will keep abreast of developments from LA, DFE and from national best practice via the OEAP website.

- All staff will be made aware of their responsibilities via staff INSET and policy update. It is the responsibility of Visit Leaders to be aware of current policy and LA guidelines.

RISK MANAGEMENT AND RISK ASSESSMENT

Risk management, in the context of outdoor learning and off-site visits, is a two-stage process:

1. The identification of the potential benefits to be gained from an activity, along with any risks to the health and safety of those involved.
2. The implementation of a plan to best realise these benefits, using professional judgement to ensure that the level of risk does not exceed that which can be justified by the benefits.

The fact that most human activity involves risk, and that this cannot be eliminated unless activities are not undertaken is recognised by both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and the Department for Education (DfE):

"HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life - it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice". (School trips and outdoor learning activities: Tackling the health and safety myths, HSE).

"School employers should always take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that in schools risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether but it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork". (The Department for Education's advice on health and safety for Schools updated February 2014)

There are two broad categories that require risk management and planning:

1. Routine visits that involve no more than an everyday level of risk and are covered by establishment Procedures and Policy. Such visits should require minimal planning or preparation beyond what is needed to make best use of the learning opportunity. In a school context, they are simply lessons in a 'different' classroom.

2. Visits requiring additional planning, and some level of specific risk assessment. A visit moves into this category because one or more aspects cannot be managed adequately by existing procedures and policy. This may be due to distance from the establishment, the nature of the activities, the environment or venue(s), the nature of the particular group, the need for specialist leader competencies, or any combination of these.

For some visits this will involve detailed planning over an extended period of time. The additional steps needed to manage these aspects should be identified and recorded.

Risk management involves answering two basic questions:

1. What could go wrong?
2. What are we going to do about it?

This process happens at three levels:

Generic Risk Assessment

Policies and Procedures that apply across a range of visits (normally recorded).

This is guidance or practice that remains constant regardless of the nature of the visit and they form part of an establishment's policy and procedures. It covers the management of risks identified as relevant to all visits involving similar activities.

At St. Bernadette's School this will cover:

- Visits in local area, including crossing the road
- Sporting events
- Travel to visits
- Visits to local church
- When using a generic risk assessment, it is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure it is fit for purpose and whether additional activity-specific information needs to be assessed for risk and added.

Visit-specific Risk Assessment

- Carried out before the visit takes place (recorded)
- This is the identification and management of any risks not already covered through generic risk management. If existing generic documents cover everything then there is no need to repeat anything.

- It is unique to each occasion and should address staffing, activity, group, environment and distance
- These could record all significant findings for a particular visit or they may simply record issues not covered by existing generic documents.
- In the absence of generic documents, any significant findings should be included in the visit specific record.

Dynamic/on-going Risk Assessment

- Carried out continuously throughout the visit (not necessary to record)
- This refers to the on-going monitoring of all aspects of the visit/activity by the visit leaders/volunteers. The group and the level of risk must be monitored and assessed throughout and, if circumstances dictate, activities should be curtailed or amended.
- In practice, it is often these on-going decisions of the Visit Leader(s) that determine whether the group remains safe and whether the activity is successful.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES AND INCIDENT REPORTING

When we look at how things can go wrong on an Off-Site Visit, it is possible to consider emergencies in four categories, depending upon the nature of the incident. Planning and preparation for Off-Site Visits should ensure an appropriate response to an emergency in any of these categories, at any time of day or night.

Incident:

a situation that is dealt with by the Visit Leadership Team. This may, perhaps, involve some communication back to School or to parents/carers, and some support from the Educational Visits Co-ordinator/Headteacher but the Visit Leader remains in control and is able to cope.

Emergency:

an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of the Visit Leadership Team and which requires the School's Emergency Plan for Off-Site Visits to be initiated. This may involve some communication with the Employer (Walsall Council) and support from it, but the school takes control of the situation and is able to cope. An incident is an emergency where:

- A group member has suffered a serious injury
- A group member is at risk
- A group member has gone missing for a significant period
- Any other incident beyond normal coping mechanism of the visit leader

Critical Incident:

an incident which overwhelms the coping mechanisms of both the Visit Leadership Team and the School, and which requires the Establishment Emergency Plan and the Employer Critical Incident Plan to be initiated. The Employer takes control of the situation and supports the school and the visit staff/participants. For example - An incident meets the criteria as laid down in the Walsall Council Policy - Goes beyond the ability of the school to cope Responding to a critical incident

- The Visit Leadership Team should **stabilise** the situation as far as possible.
- The Visit Leadership Team should **alert** the School Emergency Contact.
- The School Emergency Contact should **decide** the level of response required and, when necessary, **initiate** the Emergency Plan and **alert** the Employer's Emergency Contact.
- The Employer's Emergency Contact should **initiate** the Employer's Critical Incident Plan for Off-Site Visits.

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an educational visit or learning outside the classroom activity has either:

- Suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality;
- Is at serious risk;
- Or has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

Major Incident:

an incident which (if in the UK) is declared as a major incident by the Police, who will take control, and where the relevant Local Authority's Major Incident Plan is initiated, or where (if outside the UK) the relevant authorities take control. Both the School's and the Employer's Response Plans will be required in order to coordinate with the Police or other authorities.

Relevant emergency contact telephone numbers will be carried by leaders at all times during offsite educational visits, but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency.

Key Points:

Deciding what to do in the event of an accident or emergency should form part of the planning and preparation of every Off-Site Visit, and be written down as Emergency Procedures for the visit. All members of the Visit Leadership Team should be familiar with these.

- All staff should carry information of who to contact in case of an emergency
- The Emergency Card should be carried at all times by the Visit Leader.

- Staff should carry a mobile phone. They should also ensure school has all necessary up to date contact numbers.
- In cases of incidents and emergencies, staff will contact the school office during the day or the agreed emergency contact (24 hours) in case of residential visits.
- School will then respond in line with Walsall Council Policy and Guidance for Educational Visits.
- If necessary, emergency services will be called, e.g. ambulance by the leader and/or School.
- School will contact parents/carers in case of any emergency and the designated emergency contact will be responsible for this. The Emergency Contact will hold all the relevant information, including contacts, close at hand at all times whilst the visit is in progress (paper copies, in case electronic information is inaccessible).
- All adults on the visit should know who the Visit Leader is, and young people should also know what to do in case of an emergency.
- For residential visits, plans must take into account the possibility of an incident occurring out of normal working hours. The procedures of the establishment will also be followed.
- Useful documents include OEAP leader checklists, available on the website.
- All staff hold emergency basic first aid training and will follow procedures, as necessary.
- All information about incidents will be recorded, in line with Walsall Council Policy.

BEHAVIOUR

- School Policies on behaviour and safeguarding will be followed at all times.
- All children will be reminded of behaviour expectations and they will mirror those expected in school.
- Children will be reminded of safety procedures prior to all visits and the timetable of the day will be explained to them. It will be made clear who is the group and overall Visit Leader.
- For children who have challenging behaviour issues, a risk assessment will be undertaken and all possible measures will be put in place to ensure the child is included in the school trip. A child will only ever be excluded in extreme cases from outdoor visits if their behaviour poses a risk to themselves or other children and adults. This assessment will be undertaken in consultation with parents/carers.

INCLUSION

- This Policy presumes an entitlement of all children to participate in events, and is in line with the Equality Policy.
- Accessibility issues will be considered as part of the planning process and realistic modification or adaptations will be made wherever possible.

INSURANCE

- The School is covered by the LA insurance and all visits are covered by the Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance.

FINANCE

- When arranging a visit, the cost effectiveness and value for money that the activity offers will be part of the planning process.
- Parents/carers will be asked for contributions towards the cost and School will support with funding, whenever possible.
- Visits will only be cancelled if the majority of costs cannot be met or supported by school funds.
- No children will be excluded from visits (other than residential or those outside of school hours) if parents cannot pay.