



Belmont School

Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 Belmont School provides many opportunities for its pupils to enrich and enhance their on-site learning through use of Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits. This encompasses residential activities, environmental studies, sports, physical and cultural activities, business visits, conference and adventurous activities.
- 1.2 The value of off-site educational visits is recognised by the Governing body and fully supported throughout the School. It is emphasised that a culture of safety must prevail and there is a need for careful planning and adherence to statutory procedures. Off-site educational visits must be well-managed, information communicated and responsibilities recognised.
- 1.3 Belmont has adopted the EVOLVE software used by West Sussex County Council and many other Local Authorities. All planning of educational visits will be completed using this software. This document outlines the specific policies and procedures. It supplements and follows the advice and guidance contained within the following significant publications:
 - 1.3.1 West Sussex County Council's Regulations for Educational Visits and the use of EVOLVE and National Guidance: September 2018. See: <http://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/publicdocs/?fileid=3672&domain=westsussexvisits.org>
Department for Education advice on health & safety for schools, regularly updated. See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>
Before planning an overseas visit the member of staff should visit the FCO website to determine the safety of the country for intended visit: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice>
 - 1.3.2 The Health and Safety Executive statement: "School Trips and Outdoor Learning Activities - Tackling the Health & Safety myths. Available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>
 - 1.3.3 WSCC Adventurous Activities Guidance 2018-2019: https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/document_download.asp?fileid=3673

2 Roles and Responsibilities

- 2.1 The Governing Body satisfies itself that the appropriate procedures, risk assessments, and control measures are in place and that the documented guidance notes are being followed. All off-site visits that are residential, abroad, or hazardous need to be approved by the Governing Body. Such approval must be recorded in the minutes of the Estates, Health & Safety Committee.
- 2.2 The Head is delegated by the Governing Body to approve all off-site educational visits of a perceived low risk, local, daily or regular nature. This is recorded through use of the EVOLVE system.
- 2.3 The Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) ensures that all off-site activities follow the correct procedures. The person with these responsibilities will approve the group leader for

every visit and monitor the written risk assessments to ensure good practice. In addition, the following responsibilities and duties are undertaken:

- 2.3.1 Support the group leader in identifying the purpose for the visit and the selection, training and briefing of appropriate supervising adults and volunteer helpers. (It is important to consider the continuing professional development needs of staff engaged in these activities. Resources will need to be made available.)
 - 2.3.2 Ensure that Vetting & Barring Scheme / Disclosure & Barring Service checks are in place where necessary.
 - 2.3.3 Arrange the Emergency Contact Duty Officer and draw up proper procedures to be followed in such an event.
 - 2.3.4 Keep records and make reports of accidents and “near misses”. Review and regularly monitor procedures.
 - 2.3.5 Ensure that the visit complies with this policy.
- 2.4 The Group Leader is responsible for identifying the purpose of the visit and following the checklist. A risk assessment is necessary for all off-site visits. Significant risks and their control measures will need to be recorded and attached to the EVOLVE visit form. This will take account of:
- 2.4.1 Generic risk assessments are published in this document and when using EVOLVE. There are also guidance documents in the resources section of EVOLVE.
 - 2.4.2 Event Specific Risks as identified from a pre-visit or thorough knowledge or experience of the environment, accommodation, the leader’s competence, the group and other factors such as transport.
 - 2.4.3 On-going risks identified by the professional staff responding to changing circumstances and the success of planned activity and procedures. The participants and staff will be fully briefed on the purpose and the risk assessment control measures.
- 2.5 Participants are encouraged to consider risks involved in an off-site educational activity and to assist in the design of appropriate risk management strategies that support their learning. They will be fully aware of the purpose of the visit and understand expectations of behaviour. NB It is vitally important that the Group Leader completes the Risk Assessment process well in advance of the trip being planned’ for residential/ overseas trips this should be a minimum of 6 months to allow for Governor / LA approval (see 3.4 below). For all other trips this should be a minimum of 6 weeks, unless otherwise agreed with the EVC and/ or Head. This is to ensure that the EVC can properly evaluate the viability of the trip and have enough time for the Group Leader to action any necessary changes.

3 Guidance Notes for Off-Site Educational Visits

- 3.1 To ensure proper good practice and compliance with the necessary regulations it is expected that all group leaders will familiarise themselves with the published advice and guidance. Further information is available from the EVOLVE web-site (www.westsussexvisits.org). Training for group leaders can be arranged to include all aspects of supervision, ongoing risk assessments (including being prepared to stop an activity that has become too hazardous) and how to deal with an emergency. Access to such training is also available through the WSCC Outdoor Education Office (0330 222 8344).
- 3.2 In order to plan an off-site activity the EVC should be involved in discussing plans at an early stage. Routine or local visits such as games matches need to be planned ahead also and a generic risk assessment for matches should be held by the Bursar. It may be possible to approve a series of events on a termly basis. No financial commitment should be agreed until all relevant approvals have been achieved.
- 3.3 Copies of Parental Consent Forms must be available for the Emergency Contact and the Group Leader to take on the visit.

- 3.4 An Evolve Visit form must be completed for all residential visits and for those that are either visits abroad or for adventurous/hazardous pursuits. The form will need to be submitted to, and approved by, the EVC and Head at least six months in advance and certainly before becoming financially committed. These types of off-site activity also need the Governing body's approval, and this has been delegated to the Estates, Health & Safety Committee. Off-site Group Leaders should check to see if insurance cover is already being provided by a tour operator, or external provider.
- 3.5 It is vital that in the current COVID-19 circumstances that all off-site visits, including matches, undergo a thorough Covid controls Risk Assessment as part of the normal RA planning process. This will include staff obtaining copies of an establishments Covid Control Measures, this should be attached to the EVOLVE forms. A minimum of 72 hours before a planned visit a further Risk Assessment of the location of the trip should be undertaken to ascertain infection levels in that area, at this point if the infection rate is above the Government guidelines then it should be recommended that the trip is cancelled or postponed.
- 3.6 On return the Group Leader must report to the EVC and, where necessary, an evaluation report should be completed in order to achieve any learning about a 'near miss' or where an incident took place. If an accident form was completed at the venue, there is a need to place a copy of the form on record within school. A general evaluation of the visit is possible, within 28 days, through the EVOVE visit form. This can inform future visits and may be a useful check on the value of the risk assessments undertaken. **NB it is vital that evaluations of trips are undertaken so that Group Leaders/ Governors/ EVC and Head can assess the benefit of trips for future reference and for Group Leaders/ participants to see where improvements to management of the trip can be made.**
- 3.7 Risk Assessment forms should be completed and attached to the Evolve form when risks are perceived as significant. External providers will have their own risk assessment documents that can be used to help in this process. For certain activities an Adventurous Activity Licence is legally required (see www.aala.org.uk). If this is the case, the provider's licence number should be quoted instead of copies of their risk assessment documentation.
- 3.8 Providers that hold a LOTC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge have been externally assessed and are acceptable as a 'checked' provider on the EVOLVE site. When completing a risk assessment on EVOLVE reference to these providers will suffice instead of copies of their risk assessment documentation.
- 3.9 When visiting a provider holding either a Adventurous Activity License or LOTC Quality Badge, it is the Group Leader's responsibility to make themselves aware of the content of the providers risk assessment documentation.
- 3.10 Emergency Action Plan - this document will be held separately by the Bursar and EVC and will only be acted on in the event of an emergency.

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