

St John's Church of England VA Primary School



OFF-SITE VISITS AND ACTIVITIES POLICY

Agreed by the Governors

Agreed: November 2025

Review: November 2027

INTRODUCTION

Off-site visits/activities are arranged by or on behalf of a Local Authority School, Academy or Educational Establishment, and normally take place away from the establishment grounds. Off-site activities are known to supplement and enrich a young person's education by providing learning and experiences that may not be immediately available to them. The purpose of this off-site visits policy is to describe how St John's Primary School seeks to deliver its off-site activities with the aim of providing methods of education, development, experiences and enrichment beyond the classroom and the school boundary.

This policy seeks to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits to manage and minimise risk, ensuring the safety and health of all pupils, staff and volunteers at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make off-site visits available to all pupils and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with additional needs. Off-site visits usually take place within the school/working day, but the school may also organise and deliver off-site activities that take place outside of normal school/working day hours or involve overnight residence away from home.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils that could not be provided on the school site alone;
- Promote the independence of our children as learners, enabling them to grow and develop in new and different learning environments.

Curriculum Links

A key objective of off-site visits is that it can broaden the knowledge, learning and experiences to the national curriculum. For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities that may include learning beyond the classroom or visits to specialist venues. All activities should be in line with guidance published by the Local Authority.

Residential Activities

Residential visits enable children and young people to take part in a wider range of outdoor and adventurous activities. Residential visits must only be undertaken with the endorsement of the Local Authority, and in line with Government/Outdoor Education National current guidance.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The key role involved in the planning, management and approval of all off-site visits is that of the External Visit Co-ordinator (EVC). The establishment head will ensure that it has a trained EVC, whose responsibilities include:

- Ensuring that risk assessments are completed and, when appropriate, individual safety plans.
- Ensuring that emergency arrangements are in place.
- Keeping up to date with any national or local authority guidance updates on off-site visits.
- Supporting the Governing Board in any decision on approval.
- Ensuring that Visit Leaders are competent to lead, and support staff/volunteers are suitable.
- Verifying that all accompanying adults have been DBS checked (where relevant).
- Making sure that all consent and medical forms are obtained.
- Keeping records of visits and provide after-visit evaluation to aid future visits.

The school's trained EVC is: Olly Priestley

Other key stakeholders involved in an off-site activity are listed below. Further guidance on the roles and responsibilities for each stakeholder can be found on the [Somerset Council Outdoor Education Advice Website](#)

- Governing Board
- Visit Leader
- Teacher
- Adult Volunteer
- Young People
- Parent/Carer

HOW VISITS ARE AUTHORISED

Staff proposing to arrange an off-site activity must seek and obtain the approval of the Headteacher and Governing Board (as necessary), in advance, before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

CATEGORY A VISITS/ACTIVITIES

Approval for Category A visits and activities has been delegated by the Governing Board to the Head Teacher. Governors must review delegation arrangements annually as part of Health and Safety Policy for school.

Delegated responsibilities form: [Delegated responsibilities form](#)

CATEGORY B VISITS/ACTIVITIES

Approval for Category B visits or activities must be obtained from the Governing Board and the Headteacher before they take place. Endorsement is also required from the Outdoor Education Adviser, managed by the Local Authority.

CLASSIFICATION OF EXTERNAL VISITS:

External/off-site visits fall under one of three categories:

Category A	Non-adventurous, local activities
Category B	Adventurous activities, residential, activities that require an overnight stop, or off-site visits that take place abroad
Category C	Duke of Edinburgh's Award activities

Further guidance on the classification of visits can be found on: [Classification of Visits](#)

PLANNING A VISIT OR ACTIVITY

The Visit Leader must ensure that the visit or activity is planned, and endorsement has been given by the External Visit Coordinator and Outdoor Education Adviser (if applicable) before the activity or off-site visit commences.

When planning **Category A** activities, a record of the trip or activity on the EEC website is optional. However, a record within the school or establishment of a planned off-site activity should be kept, via the completion of a form such as the [Visit Information Collection Sheet](#).

Category B and C activities should be carried out using the EEC Health and Safety Management system. This system provides the basis for risk management together with the online tool to record details of the off-site activity, together with the approval process required by the establishment's EVC and Local Authority.

Useful links:

[EEC Somerset Council Outdoor Education Advice Website](#)

VISIT PLAN

The visit plan for intended visits must include the following:

- Risk assessments for transport, together with supervision arrangements for the planned off-site activities or visit to a specific venue
- A clear message outlining the objectives to the off-site activity e.g. curriculum/development
- Supervision to pupil ratios
- Itinerary outlining transport arrangements, timings, overview of site visit or programme of activities
- Visit Leader details together with details of group leaders or volunteers supporting the activity
- Emergency contact details

RISK ASSESSMENT

All relevant risk assessments must be carried out by the Visit Leader before any proposed visit or activity takes place. Existing risk assessments should be checked to ensure that they are still suitable and sufficient.

EEC provides comprehensive frameworks for venues and activities and should be used for visit/activity planning. The key aspect of a risk assessment is the conducting of checks and pre-visits on a venue or site before the activity commences.

Key issues from the completed risk assessments or safe working procedures must be shared with adults/supervisors involved in the visit/activity.

TRANSPORT

Risk assessments must be carried out for the mode of transport. When hiring a coach or minibus, only use companies that have been endorsed by Transporting Somerset. Please also consider the use of a second support vehicle, where possible, to account for emergencies or contingency planning when on an off-site visit.

If using a self-drive minibus whether, owned, leased or hired, drivers must have received training within the last four years through Transporting Somerset email: transport@somerset.gov.uk.

If using staff vehicles, ensure that [Driver Risk Assessment \(F14a\)](#) has been completed before the visit.

Using vehicles belonging to parents is discouraged. If, however, the decision is made to seek transport from parents the driver risk assessment (F14a) **must** be completed. A DBS check may also

be required, depending on the frequency and contact an adult/volunteer has with young people that may be travelling in that vehicle, and during the off-site activity.

Communication with Parents

The parents of young people taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Whilst consent is not required for off-site activities that take place during the school day, parents must give their permission in writing before a child can be involved in any off-site activities scheduled to take place outside of normal school hours or considered to be 'higher risk' e.g. overnight trips, residentials and adventurous activities classed as Category B and C trips and activities.

FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Emergency Procedures:

Adults accompanying the group(s) on the visit/activity must be informed of the emergency procedures by the Visit Leader and provided with an emergency contact point and number. This will normally be the establishment number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day, the telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided. The *Dealing with Major Incidents* document may provide the basis for your emergency arrangements

Attendance:

The School Office should be provided with a list of everyone that is participating in the off-site activity (pupils and adults), together with a copy of the itinerary for the activity. Details should also include venue information, and transport operator, where applicable.

Group Safety:

The safety of the group(s), especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the Visit Leader is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of the group, liaising with venues or providers where activities are led by external bodies. This involves taking note of any information relating to medical or dietary requirements, and ensuring that pupils are both safe, well and are always looked after.

Behaviour:

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual pupil is likely to compromise the safety of others, the Visit Leader should discuss with the Headteacher/Visits Coordinator and measures put in place to enable the pupil to take part, especially if it is part of the curriculum. An example of these measures could include a specific risk assessment or plan which identifies any additional support or supervision. A behaviour code, agreed by all participants, should be in place before the visit/activity takes place and parents should also accept responsibility for their child's behaviour. Procedures from the School's Behaviour Policy can be implemented where behaviour or discipline puts others at risk or jeopardises the visit/activity.

Finance:

The school must inform parents/carers if an organised off-site visit activity will incur additional charges. Additional charges can be requested from parents/carers where:

- Educational activities are provided outside of school hours
- Provision of education outside of the National Curriculum
- Board and Lodging for a pupil on a school residential (exceptions may be given here where parents/carers are in receipt of certain benefits)

- Extended services e.g. out of hours activity clubs

Inclusion:

The school will make every effort to include young people with disabilities in its programme of off-site activities. Where activities are planned that require adaptations or modifications to enable accessibility, the school will make necessary arrangements with the venue or provider before the visit. Inclusion also enables young people with disabilities to participate with friends and peers.

Training:

The School promotes and supports training for its staff in Outdoor Education. The School's EVC is appointed upon successful training of the External Visits Coordinator course. Staff identified to lead on trips and off-site activities will be supported by the School to complete Visit Leader Training. Other training e.g. specific to a field of Outdoor Education (sailing, climbing, walking, DofE) is recognised and first aid training in conjunction with off-site visits is also required, with refresher training required on a 3-year basis.

DATA PROTECTION

Personal data includes information by which an individual can be identified. Items commonly used for off-site visits where personal data may be managed by the school includes:

- Consent Forms (likely to reference names, addresses, dietary and medical requirements)
- Emergency Contact Information
- Care Plans
- Photographs (e.g. of activities that the young people have completed)

Retention and use of this information will only be used for the safety and welfare of the child where consent has been given by the child's parent or guardian. This data will be:

- Stored securely
- Only kept for reasons of child protection and welfare in association with off-site visits
- Destroyed once the data is no longer required (e.g. at the end of an academic year following a successful trip where no incidents were recorded).

ACCIDENTS/INCIDENTS

In the event of an accident or incident during an off-site activity, the school will follow its own accident or incident reporting procedures. Where significant accidents occur (e.g. hospitalisation of the injured party, major injury etc), the school will record the incident on the EEC to account for further investigation and possible reporting to the Health & Safety Executive.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

It is good practice to monitor and review the successes and failures of your off-site activities in line with your curriculum/development objectives. This is to ensure that off-site visits provide enrichment and positive experiences that off-site visits are designed to deliver.

An external review form is available on the SC Outdoor Education website: [Review form](#)

This policy is monitored by the Full Governing Board and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed _____ Date _____

Jo Leigh
Chair of Governing Board

FURTHER GUIDANCE AND HELP

Health & Safety Executive: School trips and outdoor learning activities:

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

Learning outside the classroom:

<http://www.lotc.org.uk/>

Outdoor Education National Advisors Panel:

<http://oeapng.info/>

Somerset Council Outdoor Education Website (SCOEA):

<https://www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/Page/37933>

Visit Leaders Check List

Must Do:

Ensure that the purpose of your visit has clear educational aims and objectives.

Document the Year group/Key Stage of the young people in the purpose of visit and educational objectives area.

Check any relevant, generic, risk assessments and share with visit supervisors. *

Outline the off-site visit objectives and expectations to all supervisors/leaders involved.

Any required new risk assessments to be completed and shared with visit supervisors.

All critical supervisors are listed and appear in the ratio box. Other supervisors or additional support must be listed in the application.

All attendee numbers to be recorded in the ratio box.

If the activity is adventurous and is being led by a qualified member of staff from your educational establishment, ensure that they have completed an EV3 form.

Ensure both the insurance box and the category of visit is selected.

Itinerary to be completed denoting travel stages (to and from venue) and a stage(s) denoting planned activities and supervision arrangements.

Emergency contact number to be recorded for the visit - home and away.

Emergency arrangements, including first aid, have been communicated to relevant supervisors and participants in case of emergency during the off-site visit.

The visit must be submitted for External Visit Co-ordinator approval prior to the date of departure and in good time for OEA approval (Category B and C visits).

Confirmed travel or transport arrangements with an operator (if required).

Confirmed accommodation arrangements, including accessibility (if required).

Ensure that the External Visit Coordinator is aware of the trip and has given approval (Local authority for category B and C activities).

Considered alternative plans if factors such as bad weather, venue or transport issues arise.

Checked the weather for outdoor activities, considering temperature, daylight hours, rain, snow etc prior to the off-site visit.

***Note: A risk assessment must be completed for the planned activity, whilst a generic risk assessment can be used to cover an activity that is regular or will be run by one or more groups or classes.** (Example – a residential to Kilve Court would require a Kilve Court risk assessment and coach or minibus travel risk assessment)

Regular activities, e.g. Coach Travel should be reviewed on an annual basis by the school's health and safety co-ordinator.

Visit Leaders need to ensure that they have looked at the risk assessments relevant to the activity and shared them with all supervisors who are involved – it will NOT require reviewing or completion of a new assessment for each visit.

Should do (Helpful to trip planners in the future)

Conduct a pre-visit to the venue; or contact the venue; or research the venue website beforehand to confirm that the venue will meet the educational aims and objectives; is inclusive for young people of all abilities; provides a safe and secure environment for the planned activities (and residence if the group is staying).

Add links to information regarding the trip to be found on your school web site into the links page (<http://www.school.somerset>).

Add the location of documents regarding the trip to be found within your school into the documents page.

Engage the young people in the planning and risk assessment elements of the organised activity to enrich the off-site visit experience.

Add your completed risk assessments to the 'assessments' page of your external visit application.

On return, rate your external provider and add comments on their performance by visiting the Provider details.

On return, rate your transport operator and add comments on their performance by visiting the Operator details.

Monitor and evaluate the visit or activity to identify successes/whether the aims were met/learning areas for future trips.