

FOREST FEDERATION
TRIPS AND VISITS POLICY
JUNE 2024



DUE FOR RENEWAL JUNE 2025

Introduction

This Policy aligns with Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC) Policy for Educational Visits. The CCC Policy and associated Guidance material is not repeated here as it is regularly updated in accordance with legislation and best practice and therefore should be accessed online.

The federation schools provides a rich and varied programme of opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom - within the schools, the local area and further afield. The programme of visits is structured and progressive to gradually develop young peoples' confidence, independence, responsibility and specific learning objectives.

This policy covers all offsite visits and some on site learning outside the classroom. This policy is managed by the Heads of School and Educational Visit Coordinators. It provides a local framework for staff planning off site visits.

Stukeley EVC – Karen Page
Newton EVC – Rachel Stephens

Visits fall into one of three zones as defined by the National Guidance (NG) documents, Zone 1, 2 and 3 and NG website (www.oeapng.info)

Roles

The roles essential to the management of Educational Visits are; Visit Leader, Assistant Leaders, Volunteers, Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC), Heads of School, Executive Head Teacher, Governing Body and Employer (CCC).

All roles are clearly defined on the NG website

Within the schools, all roles are covered and managed by staff and the Governing Body.

The schools have a Trained EVC who attends training and updates provided by CCC relevant to this role.

All visits have a named visit leader and assistant staff who are aware of their role and responsibilities contained within the NG website. Volunteers are managed under the school volunteer policy including relevant DBS checks.

Competence of Staff

Staff must be competent and confident to lead visits. Across Stukeley and Newton, we ensure that staff are trained in accordance with their role and the responsibilities and competencies required to fulfil the role properly. We have clear processes for approving leaders to lead visits or activities. This ensures that leaders are **accountable**, **confident** and **competent** to lead the specific visits or activities for which they are approved.

Being **accountable** means that the leader has been engaged through an appropriate recruitment process, which includes vetting and induction into the establishment's policies and procedures.

The details of this process depend upon whether the leader is employed, contracted or acts as a volunteer, but in all cases is a thorough process that will establish that the leader understands the chain of accountability.

Regardless of a leader's employment status, the induction process will establish that the leader understands the chain of accountability, what is expected of them, and the establishment's policies and procedures. Being **confident** includes leaders having the ability to take charge of a situation while being aware of, and understanding, their abilities, as well as their limitations.

Being **competent** means that the leader has demonstrated the ability to operate effectively, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the activities, the group, and the environments in which the visit will take place. Competence is a combination of skills, knowledge,

awareness, judgement, training and experience. It is not necessarily related to age or position within the school. It is situational – a leader who is competent in one activity or environment may not be so in another, and it involves breadth as well as depth.

Relevant experience is not necessarily gained by repeating the same thing several times, but by experiencing a range of different activities and environments.

Procedures

All visits require planning, preparation and levels of approval. This varies according to aspects of complexity and distance. These are explained in the National Guidance.

Our schools have the zones defined for staff. Visits fit into one of three zones. If staff are unsure about a zone – then the visit rises into the next zone up for further guidance and planning.

Zone 1

'Local regular visits'

These are visits which are regular, local and straightforward to organise. The risk management will be covered by the defined zone 1 procedures and relevant risk assessment. It is the responsibility of the visit leader to ensure that these documents are amended if required because of changes in circumstances. These changes need to be recorded and noted.

Zone 1 activities for both Stukeley and Newton include; walks in and around the town/village.

Zone 2

'Normal Visits'

These are visits and activities which involve aspects of complexity that require careful planning. These visits are required to be planned and logged on the Evolve system, and will be approved by the EVC and Head of School. Advice, where required, on these visits will be provided by the Outdoor Education Adviser. Approval for visits of greater complexity may require pre-approval before undertaking detailed planning and the EVC should be consulted

Zone 3

'Adventure / Abroad and very complex visits'

These visits require specific approval at School level and the approval of the Outdoor Education Adviser. These must be entered into the Evolve system, and submitted to the Adviser at least 4 weeks before the departure date. The adviser approves visits on behalf of the employer (CCC).

Specific Advice Risk Management

This aspect is described in the guidance and forms for recording. Risk Assessments are logged in the resource section on Evolve.

Parental Consent

Both schools follow the advice on consent and do not require consent for Zone 1 visits (this has already been signed off generically). However, information must be provided to parents/ carers about these visits/activities.

Visits and activities that fall into Zones 2 and 3 and any that last beyond the school day require specific consent, the level of detail of that consent will vary according to the visit.

Group Management

Full details about group management, ratios, supervision of group, medical conditions etc. are all found via the Leaders Role buttons on the National Guidance website.

Behaviour and Inclusion

The Federation's Behaviour Policy will be applied to all visits. For purposes of inclusion, specific advice on this issue is contained online and the LA adviser can assist when working with visits.

Pre Checking Venues and Providers

Staff research the suitability of the venue and that the provision will meet the intended learning outcomes with groups needs being met before making any bookings.

External Providers

Cambridgeshire LA endorses and supports the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge. Therefore any outside organisation that holds this award does not need an evaluation, and safety paperwork does not need to be examined. Providers who do not hold the LOTC QB would be required to complete the providers form (see link below).

Adventure Providers Assurances

Across both schools, we would check with the LA Outdoor Education advisers if an adventure provider does not hold an LOTC QB before proceeding with a booking. There are other checks that the adviser will undertake and advise the school. Bookings with such companies should not be undertaken before checks are completed.

Emergency Procedures

This policy integrates into the School Emergency plan which addresses all critical incidents. All staff on a visit carry emergency contact cards and have access to the guidance detailed. The EVC and school leadership staff have access to the Critical Incident plan.

Transport

National Guidance contains full information for cars, minibuses and public transport (see link below).

For transport requests for this school leaders are asked to request and book transport at least 4 weeks in advance (minimum – the longer notice the better for coach availability)

Evaluation of visits

Following the return of a visit which has been logged on Evolve, the system has an evaluation system for staff to ensure that all visits are properly evaluated.

Staff should complete this evaluation to aid future plans.

Insurance

All visits should be covered by the County Council Insurance Scheme, and additional insurance should not normally be required or bought from a provider. The school office will contact Cambridgeshire County Council insurance providers insurance@cambridgeshire.gov.uk to check before purchasing. The insurance department has full access to Evolve and therefore the Evolve number for the visit will be provided to them to aid checking.

Charging

All financial details for a visit must be managed by the school processes, including timely budget preparation, accounting and collection of monies. Charges for parents must fit with the school charging policy. Parents must have sufficient notice of charges to enable them to make payments, and communication should include the cut-off point to enable the school to withdraw from the financial arrangements with providers if the visit is cancelled.

Parents should also be told of any arrangements that the school may have to support families who are unable to afford visits.