



**Northern Lights**  
LEARNING TRUST

# EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

**Review Date:**

**Spring 2020**

**Next Review Due:**

**Spring 2022**

**Person in Charge:**

**CEO**

**Governance:**

**Chair of Board**

## **Pastoral Care/Spiritual Development**

The quality of relationships between all members of school, staff and pupils, and the relationship with parents and carers is the area that is most commonly associated with the ethos of a church academy. It is expressed in the terms of sharing and caring. Jesus was clear in his instructions to the disciples on this matter.

‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ – Matthew 22:39.

‘This is my commandment: love each other’ - John 15:17.

Everyone associated with the academy is made in the image of God and is to be loved. This is the commandment from which Northern Lights Learning Trust derives its policy for pastoral care.

We have a series of overlapping networks of relationships, which includes governors, staff, children, parents, church members, and members of the community which the academy seeks to serve. Our pastoral work will strive to meet the significant challenge to create and maintain such networks in ways which reflect the Gospel. Those who are in leadership roles, which includes all who have a particular responsibility, ensure that by their personal example they set the highest standards expected.

It is from this premise that Christian love will pervade all aspects of life at Northern Lights Learning Trust. It will influence how we reward and teach discipline. It will affect how we value work and the achievements of pupils and staff. It will be seen in the way in which the school environment is created and cared for, in the way in which the needs of pupils, parents, and community are met, and in the way in which teaching and non-teaching staff work together effectively as a team. Pastoral care pervades all aspects of academy life and therefore will be reflected in the way the Trust is organised and the policies are written and implemented.

**The Educational Visits policy is part of the Trust’s pastoral and safeguarding system.**

The Trust has adopted Sunderland City Council guidance, which is based upon the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) on the website [www.oeapeg.info](http://www.oeapeg.info) .

#### SCOPE:

This policy applies to all External Visits involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It applies regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

#### DEFINITION:

External Visits are defined as events that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults being away from their normal school, centre or residential home premises, while in the care of the school or other service. This includes educational visits, outings, school trips and off-site activities such as: local visits to parks, museums, libraries and sports facilities; cultural, educational, recreational and exchange trips; outdoor activities; residential; field trip

#### Benefits

All children, young people and vulnerable adults should be given the opportunity of benefiting from participation in a wide range of visits and activities, including Learning Outside the Classroom, local activities, day visits, residential, field studies and outdoor adventure activities. Whether their emphasis is adventurous, academic, sporting, cultural, spiritual or creative, off-site visits and outdoor learning provide first-hand experiences that inspire and enhance learning and development in ways which are powerful and lasting. They provide a foundation for life-long learning and healthy lifestyles, as well as complementing classroom learning and enriching the curriculum.

#### Assessment of Risk

As an employer, the Academy has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level. Risk is a natural part of everyday life: all activities involve risk, and it is impossible to entirely eliminate it. Indeed, the human spirit thrives on adventure and journeys into new territory, both physical and metaphorical. It is important that children, young people and vulnerable adults learn to understand and manage risk and uncertainty for themselves. If we attempt to ‘wrap them in cotton wool’, they not only miss huge opportunities for growth but also emerge into society unable to cope with the uncertainties and challenges of adult life. Well-managed external visits, including outdoor and adventurous activities, play a vital part in helping children, young people and vulnerable adults to learn about the real world, and to understand and manage risks for themselves.

Schools are therefore encouraged to provide such opportunities for children, young people and vulnerable adults. Good planning and management of activities should be about reducing risks to an acceptable level, taking into account the potential benefits. The starting point for such a risk-benefit assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is acceptable.

Employees who follow this Code of Practice, work within the limits of their own competence, and use their common sense and professional judgement will be fully supported by the Academy.

Although some paperwork is required in order to record and communicate the decisions made, risk management should be largely a common-sense process centred upon competent staff. It should focus on significant risks, not trivial ones, and it should not become a restrictive and onerous bureaucratic exercise.

Risk assessment is a legal requirement and assessing risks associated with external visits is no different. It is simply a systematic examination of what might harm people, and should be based on common sense. Although an assessment is always required, a written risk assessment is only required when significant risks have been identified, and Sunderland Council's HSRA2 form is to be used. The reasons for recording significant risks in HSRA2 format include:

- Deciding whether to proceed, modify or cancel a proposed visit or activity
- Deciding what precautions need to be taken to prevent unnecessary harm
- Making the planning process systematic and thorough
- Informing all those involved about the risks and precautions
- Providing evidence for those responsible for approving a visit
- Demonstrating that good practice has been observed in the case of an incident.

It is also necessary to include an assessment of risk to staff members during visits that may not be identified during the assessment of risk to the children/vulnerable adults taking part (for example, violence at work).

Procedure for submitting HSR2A form:

- identify significant risks
- identify sufficient controls
- adapt procedures to ensure pupil and staff medical and SEN are appropriately met
- complete form in appropriate time scale
- upload form onto Evolve and complete visit information
- send risk assessment to EVC for approval
- the EVC will approve Category 1 visits
- Visits higher than Category 1 will be forwarded to the Headteacher for approval
- if Assessment is appropriate then the HSR2A form will be approved. If not- then the form will be returned for amendment.

### Inclusion & Equality

External visits should be available to all pupils regardless of background or abilities. Schools which provide such visits and activities must ensure that their provision meets the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

### Review & Evaluation

All visits should be reviewed after the event, with particular regard to any accidents, incidents or other significant occurrences during the visit, followed by any necessary review of procedures and/or risk assessments.

### Commissioning

If an organisation other than the Academy is commissioned to provide a service which may include External Visits, it must adopt this Code of Practice.

### Consent

As identified in National guidance, 'Schools are not required to obtain consent from parents for pupils to participate in off-site activities that take place during school hours and which are a normal part of a child's education, such as local studies and visits to a museum or library etc.' (Education Act 2002 section 29). However, where activities are deemed as higher risk or take place outside of the normal school day, additional consent will be sought from parents/carers.

### Charging

The Academy will ask for a voluntary contribution to the costs of educational visits whenever necessary. Where residential visits are voluntary (e.g. Overseas or visits to Derwent Hill Outdoor

Education Centre) parents/carers must pay the full cost. However costs may be amended at the discretion of the Academy - visit expenses may be subsidised by the Academy Educational Visits Fund.

#### External/Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Academy HAS an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in post. The role of the EVC is described in the OEAP National Guidance (see section 2 above). EVCs WILL undertake an EVC training course and a refresher / revalidation course every three years, both of which are provided by the External Visits Advisory Service to fully comply. The course includes training on visit planning, risk assessment, leader competence and required procedures.

#### External Visits Advisory Service

The Council's External Visits Advisory Service is based at Derwent Hill Outdoor Education & Training Centre, and may be contacted by phone on 017687 72005 or by email to EVAS@sunderland.gov.uk. The Advisory Service:

- provides advice and guidance to EVCs about planning visits, and clarification when required regarding this Code of Practice or the OEAP National Guidance. Requests for advice will receive a response within one week of the request being received (except over the Christmas / New Year holiday period).
- provides information on the Advisory Service pages of the Derwent Hill website [www.derwenthill.co.uk](http://www.derwenthill.co.uk) and on the Evolve system at [www.sunderlandvisits.org.uk](http://www.sunderlandvisits.org.uk)
- monitors and approves visits using the Evolve online system
- provides training for EVCs, Visit Leaders and Group Leaders.

#### Notification and approval of visits

The Evolve online system is used for notification, approval and monitoring of visits. EVCs, Headteachers are able to use Evolve to plan, authorise and monitor visits within their establishments, and visits requiring Local Authority approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Council. Key information about a visit is available through Evolve in the event of an emergency.

For the purposes of notification and approval, external visits are classified into three categories. These are based on the 'Radar' model described in the OEAP National Guidance.

The Board has decided that all educational visits (apart from regular visits in Category 1 determined by the Academy- see Appendix 1) should be entered onto Evolve. The requirement for Category 3 visits to be authorised by the Headteacher at least four weeks prior to the visit, is to provide time for any issues arising to be dealt with to allow Council approval to be given. The Governing Body of the Academy trust has agreed that Sunderland Council will act on their behalf in undertaking rigorous assessment of their risk assessment. For more complex visits, more time should be allowed. All other visits must be approved by the EVC or a member of the SLT at least one week prior to the visit.

The EVC is responsible for setting up staff to use Evolve in their establishment.

#### Adventure activities

Adventure activities are defined as including:

- Abseiling
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Camping (except 'official' campsites)
- Caving, potholing, mine exploration
- Climbing (including indoor climbing walls)

- Coasteering, coastal scrambling, sea-level traversing
- Fishing in hazardous environments (e.g. sea, fast rivers, on deep water)
- High level ropes activities
- Horse riding & equestrian sports
- Motor sport – all forms
- Mountain Biking
- River/gorge/ghyll walking or scrambling, canyoning
- Shooting, Archery, Paintballing
- Skiing (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Snowboarding (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding UK public pools with lifeguards)
- Walking (hills, mountains, open country)
- Watersports - powered craft, waterskiing (excluding commercial transport)
- Watersports - Canoeing/Kayaking
- Watersports - Rafting or improvised rafting
- Watersports - Rowing
- Watersports - Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Watersports – Surfing

Remote or hazardous locations include:

- areas more than 30 minutes walk from a road or refuge
- coastal areas with significant tidal hazards
- hazardous quarries
- steep terrain

These lists are not exhaustive: if in doubt advice should be obtained from the External Visits Advisory Service.

### Leader competence and approval

A Visit Leader is the person responsible for planning and leading a visit and will be a senior member of staff, which may involve other members of staff and volunteers, including Group Leaders.

A Group Leader is responsible for the supervision of a group of children or young people during a visit.

The Headteacher must ensure that Visit Leaders and Group Leaders are competent to carry out their responsibilities.

The External Visits Advisory Service provides Visit Leader and Group Leader training courses and can advise about competence requirements.

The OEAP National Guidance includes documents on “Assessment of Competence” and “Good Practice Basics”. Visit Leaders, Group Leaders and other staff who require guidance or support should contact their establishment’s EVC.

Staff who wish to lead adventure must have the authority of the Headteacher being the person with authority to approve visits. Approval will be based upon evidence of competence, which may include evidence of relevant qualifications, training and experience.

Leader approval for adventure activities is managed through Evolve.

- For a specific visit, evidence of the leader’s competence is required by the Activity Leader Form (ALF) which is part of the normal Evolve visit planning process.
- If a leader wishes to apply for generic approval to lead a specific adventure activity, then they should complete a Leader Approval Request (LAR) in Evolve for endorsement by the Headteacher who submits it to the Sunderland Council for approval. When this approval is given, it may be attached to future ALFs as evidence.

Accident/Incident Procedure

In the case of an incident or illness:

- Medical conditions checked by staff
- First aid must be sort from a qualified first aider on visit
- All medication recorded (time, type and amount)
- Visit leader informed
- Decision made by visit leader - is further medical advice needed?
- Headteacher (or Deputy Headteacher in absence of Headteacher) informed
- Visit leader to stay with injured pupil/adult at all times (including hospital visits) and act in Loco Parentis
- Supervision of unharmed pupils to be given to next Senior member of staff on visit or another member of staff from the Academy
- Parents informed of incident by the Headteacher
- Appropriate documentation completed

### Emergency Planning and Critical Incidents

A critical incident is an incident where any participant in a visit:

- has suffered a life threatening injury or fatality
- is at serious risk
- has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period

Services and establishments should follow their Directorate's code of practice on responding to crises and critical incidents. The OEAP National Guidance (see section 2 above) also includes information on planning for and managing critical incidents on visits, which can be found using the site's search function. The Children's Services Critical Incidents Code of Practice [a2] provides resources on planning to deal with a school emergency.

### Accident/incident reporting

The Council's Incident Reporting Procedure must be followed i.e. all accidents or near- misses involving employees or service users are reported on an IR1 form. Serious incidents must be notified immediately to the Health & Safety Team on 0191 561 1738. If support is required from the Council, the Civic Centre Control Room should be contacted on 0191 553 1999, which is available 24 hours a day and includes emergency Health & Safety cover. These numbers should be carried by leaders during visits, but should not be given to young people, service users or their parents/carers.

After any significant incident, schools/services must undertake an investigation of the incident, and review their risk assessments and emergency procedures, and should share the findings with the External Visits Advisory Service for the benefit of other schools and services. It is also good practice to record and learn from 'near misses'. Establishments should establish a system for doing this and should consider how best to share the learning outcomes of such incidents. Key information can then be passed to the External Visits Advisory Service to enable others to benefit from the lessons learned. Any "near misses" should also be reported to the Corporate Health & Safety Team using the IR1 form, who will investigate where appropriate to enable preventative strategies to be developed.

### Supervision

OEAP National Guidance (see section 2 above) includes documents on "Ratios and Effective Supervision" and "Group Management and Supervision". The Academy, in line with the recommendations of Sunderland Council, does not prescribe minimum staff to participant ratios for visits (except where the law requires minimum ratios for Early Years). Ratios and other arrangements for the effective supervision of children, young people and vulnerable adults should be determined as part of the risk assessment process by proper consideration of factors including:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group
- gender issues

- ability of the group (including special needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc)
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions)
- staff competence.

#### Staff induction/training

- All staff to receive appropriate induction training
- Staff to sign to say they have read, understood and agreed to follow the school policy
- Experienced staff to lead on educational visit (visit leader to be approved by the Headteacher)
- Where appropriate, staff to visit venue with visit leader to identify risks before pupil visit.
- EVC to share developments in Risk Assessments and Educational Visits after updates and training

#### Volunteers

- DBSs required for regular volunteers
- All volunteers to receive induction (particularly on confidentiality and protocols on appropriate behaviour)
- Volunteers must not act as visit leaders
- Volunteers must not be left unsupervised with pupils if they do not have an appropriate CRB

#### Behaviour of pupils and staff

Staff and pupils must agree to follow the Academy's behaviour policy, staff expectations and Part 2 of Teaching Standards, whilst on educational visits. This includes dealing with inappropriate behaviour.

#### Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the monitoring of visits organised by the Academy. The EVC is often best placed to carry out routine monitoring. The OEAP National Guidance includes a document on monitoring. In case of doubt or concern, advice may be obtained from the External Visits Advisory Service.

Overall compliance with this Code of Practice is monitored by the External Visits Advisory Service.

Monitoring may take place by:

- a review of visits using the Evolve system, including approval of Category 3 visits.
- a review with Service Managers / Head Teachers / EVCs / Visit Leaders of specific issues and relevant procedures and documentation, including policies, risk assessments and plans for specific visits

- direct observation of a visit in progress

The monitoring process is intended to be positive, supportive and developmental, and feedback and recommendations will be given. Areas of significant risk will be referred to the Headteacher, and high risk issues which cannot be resolved at the school level will be referred to the Academy Trust AND Sunderland Council.

#### Assessing Venues and Providers

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance on Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances. The Learning outside the Classroom Quality Badge provides sufficient reassurance that a provider meets nationally required minimum standards of safety and quality. Details of a provider's status can be checked on the Quality Badge website [www.lotqualitybadge.org.uk](http://www.lotqualitybadge.org.uk).

If a provider of activities does not hold the Quality Badge, then detailed checks should be made to ensure that it meets required standards. The most straightforward way of doing this is to use a

Provider Statement Form (available on the External Visits Advisory Service website and on Evolve).

Insurance

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance about insurance for visits.

The Academy must arrange Cancellation and Personal Accident cover for external visits, unless they already have blanket insurance cover in place. This should cover cancellation of contracts with external providers (including with Council services such as Derwent Hill), in the event of circumstances such as travel difficulties or illness or injury to participants, staff or their families.

The Council provides an opportunity for schools and other services to arrange annual travel insurance via the Insurance Section (0191 553 5084), and most Sunderland schools opt to take this. This insurance includes cover for personal effects.

Appendix 1:

Generic category 1 risk assessments - that the school has deemed appropriate to incorporate into the policy.

Appendix 2:

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Requirement for notification &amp; approval</b>
Category 1	Straightforward routine visits defined as Category 1 in a written policy by the school or service concerned, covered by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a generic risk assessment, regularly reviewed</li> <li>• blanket informed parent/carer consent</li> <li>• school/service operating procedures</li> </ul>	Evolve may be used but is not required.
Category 2	Visits requiring enhanced planning with event-specific risk assessment, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All residential visits not in Category 3</li> <li>• Non-residential visits not in Categories 1 or 3</li> </ul>	Must be authorised by the Headteacher / Manager, using Evolve This provides automatic notification to the Council of the visit.
Category 3	Higher risk visits, defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visits outside the UK</li> <li>• Visits which include adventure activities</li> <li>• Visits to remote or hazardous locations</li> </ul>	Must be authorised by the Headteacher / Manager using Evolve at least four weeks before the visit, and then approved by the Council.

Categorisation of risks:

Appendix 3:

Copies of blank proformas used by the Academy

**Signed**

**Signed**

**Chair of Trust**

**CEO**

