Educational Visits and Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Working Together to Achieve Success

Status	Draft for Full Governing Board approval
Proposed ratification	November 2026
Proposed next review	November 2027 (or earlier if guidance changes)
Policy owner	Headteacher and Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)
Applies to	All school-led educational visits, off-site activities and learning outside the classroom

1. Purpose and principles

Ravenbank Primary School values well-planned educational visits and learning outside the classroom as an integral part of a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. Visits enrich pupils' understanding of themselves, other people and the wider world, support the school's values of Friendship, Respect, Trust and Perseverance, and provide experiences that may not otherwise be available.

The school will plan purposeful activities, consider educational benefits alongside foreseeable risks, make arrangements for effective supervision, and promote meaningful participation by all pupils. This policy is read with the school's safeguarding, SEND, behaviour, medical needs, charging and remissions, and health and safety policies.

Ravenbank follows the applicable employer guidance agreed by Beam Education Trust, together with current Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance and relevant Department for Education requirements. EVOLVE will be used where required by the agreed approval arrangements.

2. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Board / Trust	**Oversee that suitable arrangements and delegated approval responsibilities are in place; seek assurance through monitoring and reporting.**
Headteacher	Ensure appropriate oversight, approve visits within delegated authority, verify staff competence and resources, make final individual participation decisions, and ensure significant incidents are escalated.
Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)	Support and challenge planning; check documentation, risk management, providers, supervision and approvals; maintain training and records; coordinate review and learning following visits.

Visit Leader	Define outcomes; identify and contact the venue, complete the purple form, check with the headteacher for authorisation, complete the Evolve risk assessment, confirm the final costings with the office team, inform parents and Personal Development lead.
SENDCo / DSL / relevant staff	Advise on reasonable adjustments, individual support and medical/safeguarding plans; share information proportionately with staff who need it.
Accompanying adults / volunteers	Follow the Visit Leader's briefing, safeguarding rules, agreed responsibilities and escalation procedures; never assume duties beyond their competence.
Parents / carers	Provide accurate and current contact, medical and relevant support information; engage with planning and agreed expectations.

3. Planning, risk management and supervision

Visit Leaders will begin with the educational purpose and anticipated benefits. They will record proportionate risk-benefit assessments for significant foreseeable risks, including travel, the venue, planned activities, weather, pupils' needs, group management and emergency arrangements. Existing provider assessments may inform school planning but do not replace assessment of the school group.

Risk assessment is a continuing process: staff must make dynamic decisions when conditions change, including modifying or stopping an activity. Staff and helpers will be briefed on responsibilities, headcounts, meeting points, first aid, medication, missing-person actions and communication arrangements.

There is no universal staff-to-pupil ratio for school visits. The Visit Leader, EVC and Headteacher will decide effective supervision for each visit, taking account of age, developmental stage, SEND, behaviour, activity, environment, experience of adults and contingency cover. Applicable statutory EYFS ratios must also be met.

A reasonable guide for ratios is:

- Reception 1:4
- Year 1-3 1:6
- Year 4 to 6: 1:10-1:15

Staff supervising SEN pupils are not included in these ratios.

Transport arrangements must also be risk assessed, including embarkation, seatbelts, behaviour while travelling, safe crossing, driver distraction and access needs. Coaches and other providers must be suitable for the proposed journey; private-car transport, if exceptionally used, requires documented approval and checks.

4. Inclusion, SEND, behaviour and participation

Educational visits should be available and accessible to all pupils. The school will plan for inclusion from the outset and consider the Equality Act 2010, reasonable adjustments, suitable venues, adapted activities, communication support, sensory and medical requirements, additional staffing and individual planning. The SENDCo and parents/carers will be involved where appropriate.

Pupils are expected to follow clearly taught and age-appropriate safety and behaviour expectations. Where a pupil has a history of behaviour that raises a significant safety concern, or other individual needs affect participation, the school will undertake a personalised risk assessment rather than apply a blanket rule. The assessment will consider the actual demands of the visit, specific evidence, foreseeable risks, disability-related needs, potential adjustments, agreed support strategies, additional supervision and the remaining risk.

Any preparation programme or behaviour agreement should identify achievable expectations, support and review points. Where significant risk remains and cannot be managed reasonably, the Headteacher may decide that a pupil cannot safely take part in a particular visit. The decision will be proportionate, documented with the reasons and adjustments considered, discussed with parents/carers, and reviewed if circumstances change. A suitable alternative educational experience will be considered.

5. Approval of visits and EVOLVE

The school will apply the visit categories and approval route required by the current employer/commissioned educational visits service. The September 2022 Warrington guidance describes Category A (routine local), Category B (less routine or more complex) and Category C (residential, adventurous or overseas). Under that document, Category A and B visits are delegated to the Headteacher and Category C visits require additional local authority approval through EVOLVE.

No Category C visit may proceed without all required approvals. The 2022 Warrington document specifies submission at least 30 days before the visit; current deadlines and whether these mean calendar or working days must be verified with the relevant service. Staff should plan substantially earlier where reservations, accessibility adjustments or specialist activities are involved.

The EVC will maintain a record of approvals, check that Visit Leaders are assessed as competent and that the current EVOLVE arrangements are followed. Repeat routine local visits may use an approved operating procedure where permitted by employer guidance.

6. Parents, consent and information

Parents/carers will receive timely information about the purpose, itinerary, travel, cost, staffing arrangements, expectations and any significant risks. Pupils eligible for Pupil Premium (or have been within the last six years) are funded by the school's Pupil Premium budget.

Consent will be obtained where required by law, current employer guidance or the nature of the activity. For most curriculum activities during normal school hours involving children above nursery age, written consent is not normally a legal requirement. Higher-risk activities, residential visits or visits outside normal hours will require specific consent.

Necessary medical, emergency contact and support information will be checked before departure. Personal information shared with external providers will be limited to what is necessary, handled securely and in line with the school's privacy arrangements. Permission for photographs is managed separately from permission to participate.

7. Safeguarding, health and emergencies

All visits are subject to the school's child protection and safeguarding procedures, including Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Visit Leaders will know how to contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), make and record a safeguarding report, respond to a disclosure, and manage concerns relating to adults or providers. Suitable checks, briefing and supervision of volunteers will be arranged in accordance with their actual role and applicable safeguarding requirements.

The Visit Leader will ensure ready access to pupil emergency contacts, relevant health care plans, medication, first-aid provision and emergency procedures. For residential or out-of-hours visits a named, contactable school home contact and deputy will be established and supplied with the relevant itinerary and pupil information. The Visit Leader and home contacts must know the arrangements for a missing pupil, serious injury, evacuation or critical incident, and who communicates with families and external agencies.

In immediate danger staff will call emergency services first, secure the safety of the group and follow the agreed Trust/employer critical-incident procedure. Records of actions, decisions and communications will be retained.

8. External providers, insurance and charging

External venues, instructors and transport providers must be suitable, with appropriate competence, safeguarding arrangements, insurance, facilities and activity controls. Where the current employer guidance requires it, the school will check an appropriate Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge or obtain a completed provider statement. Preliminary visits will be completed where proportionate to the activity and the available assurance.

The EVC will confirm that activities and participants, including staff and volunteers, are covered by relevant insurance and that exclusions or additional cover have been considered. Charging, voluntary contributions and financial support will follow the school's Charging and Remissions Policy and applicable law. No pupil will be treated less favourably solely because a voluntary contribution has not been made.

9. Evaluation, monitoring and review

After visits, Visit Leaders will review educational impact, pupil participation, inclusion, incidents, near misses and any improvements to future planning. Significant issues will be reported to the EVC and Headteacher promptly, recorded in the appropriate school system and reflected in risk assessments and staff training. Reviews and visit evaluations will be recorded through EVOLVE when required.

The Headteacher will provide the Governing Board with proportionate assurance about educational visits, including participation and inclusion, serious incidents and actions taken. This policy will be reviewed annually and sooner following relevant changes to guidance or a significant incident.

10. Guidance and related policies

- Warrington Borough Council, Guidance for Learning Outside the Classroom including EVOLVE (September 2022)
- Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance: https://oeapng.info/ (including Inclusion, 24 March 2026).
- Department for Education, Health and safety on educational visits: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits
- Department for Education, Keeping children safe in education 2026: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2
- Ravenbank policies: Child Protection/Safeguarding; SEND; Behaviour; Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions; Health and Safety; Charging and Remissions; Data Protection.