Dene House Primary School

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Educational Visits Policy

















Date of last review:	Sept 2026
Date of next review:	Sept 2027
Lead member of staff:	Mr Lee Blake (Headteacher)
EVC	Mr Ian Leyland

Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes Dene House a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils of taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include, but are not limited to:

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change.
- Increased critical curiosity and resilience.
- Opportunities for meaning, making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness.
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other).
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Pupils are active participants not passive consumers, and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions in a range of contexts. ie. encouraging pupils to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility.
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills.
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, Dene House Primary School:

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: **'Durham County Council Educational Visits, Off-Site Activities and On-Site Adventures Policy and Guidance'** (All staff have access to this via EVOLVE).
2. Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info, (as recommended by the LA).
3. Uses EVOLVE, the web-based planning, notification, approval, monitoring and communication system for off-site activities.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy (ie this document), Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visit & Approval

There are three 'types' of visit:

1. **Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day.**
   These follow the 'School Learning Area' Operating Procedure (Appendix 1).
2. **Other non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**
   For our school, this includes any trips which involve vehicle transportation. These are entered on EVOLVE by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for approval.
3. **Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an adventurous activity.**

As above, but the Head authorises and then submits to the LA for approval. Note that there are a number of venues which have been given delegated approval so the Head can approve – see Evolve for the most up to date list.

Roles and Responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering all information on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Headteacher or EVC prior to planning, and certainly before making any commitments. Visit leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) is Ian Leyland, who will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) activities. The EVC is the first point of contact for advice on visit related matters, and will check final visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Headteacher. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. There is no requirement for governors to approve visits but they will be informed at regular governor meetings what visits have taken place and what is planned. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval (via EVOLVE) of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.

Staff Competence

We recognise that staff competence is the single most important factor in the safe management of visits, and so we support staff in developing their competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced visit leaders before taking on a leadership role.
- Supervision by senior staff on some educational visits.
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to their role, where necessary.

In deciding whether a member of staff is competent to be a visit leader, the Headteacher will take into account the following factors:

- Relevant experience.
- Previous relevant training.
- The prospective leader's ability to make dynamic risk management judgements, and take charge in the event of an emergency.
- Knowledge of the pupils, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Emergency Procedures

Every visit will have nominated emergency contacts. If the visit is off site for only the duration of the school day the school telephone number is sufficient to give as an emergency contact. However, if the visit is of a residential nature **two** 24hr contact numbers will be identified (i.e. mobile and/or home phone number). The emergency contacts will have a copy of the Emergency Card (EV8) with the relevant emergency contact details on. They will also have access to all the relevant medical and next of kin information. The visit leader will have a completed Emergency Card (EV7) with them at all times (this will detail the contact details for the emergency contacts).

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 2). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, or where it involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority. (Amend for non-maintained schools).

Educational Visits Checklist

Dene House Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities. This has been adapted from the LA's generic checklist. A visit should only go ahead if the answer to all relevant questions is 'YES'. Dene House Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources and all visit leaders have a copy.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time. However, parents will always be informed of the detail when their child is undertaking an educational visit. This may be done by Class Dojo

Written consent will be requested for all activities which take place outside of the School Local Learning Area and have a higher level of risk assessment needed. A 'one off' consent form will be signed by parents to cover activities such as Farm visits, city centre visits, river visits etc.

A 'one off' consent will also be signed by parents when their child enrols at school. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the school and will be used as back up if only verbal consent can be given from a parent for a trip.

Specific parental consent will also be obtained for visits of a residential, overseas or adventurous nature. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

Inclusion

Dene House Primary School will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act 2010 does not require us to place employees or participants at risk of injury or ill health in order to make reasonable adjustments.

If appropriate, we may ask the parent/carer of a particular pupil to accompany them on the visit. If there are any concerns about whether school can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of others on a visit due the specific needs of a pupil we will seek advice from the DCC Health & Safety Team.

Charging / funding for visits

Dene House Primary School will arrange payment for visits on an individual visit basis. Visits such as residential trips, which will be more expensive, will have arrangements in place for payment to be made gradually over a period of time leading up to the visit. Those pupils who receive specific benefits may be entitled to attend the visit with no charge. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Transport

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – Staff will not use their own vehicles to transport pupils to or from educational visits except in emergency situations and only be identified members of staff with appropriate levels of insurance.

Use of Parents and Volunteers Cars – Dene House Primary School will not permit parents or volunteers to transport pupils as part of normal practice.

Insurance

Dene House Primary School is covered by TLT Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance for activities when away from the school site, home base or when employees are working in the community within the UK. We are not covered for personal accident benefits or loss of personal property while on educational visits. If necessary we can arrange this insurance for individual visits.
For overseas visits separate insurance will be taken out.

Additional notes on Supervision

When children are walking – either to/from transport or to/from a venue, they will be supervised with one member of staff at the front of the line and one member of staff at the back. Children must never go in front of the member of staff at the front of the line or behind the member of staff at the back of the line.

Children will be counted before leaving school, before leaving a venue and at regular points throughout the visit, including –

- Onto and off buses/other transport
- When moving from different areas of the venue, for example when moving from a workshop into another part of a Museum
- After visiting toilets

When crossing any roads, one member of staff will stand in the middle of the road to stop traffic, children will cross the road with another adult, one at the front of the line and one at the back.

Ratios – Dene House Primary School follows Durham County advice for ratios:

- 1:6 Early Years
- 1:6 KS1
- 1:15 Lower KS2
- 1:15 Upper KS2

Staffing numbers may increase depending on the activity, but will not go below minimum staffing numbers.

First Aider –on every trip, there will be at least one paediatric First Aider.

Other Topics

Swimming Lessons-Swimming lessons are provided by DCC SLA. Transport is via DCC chartered bus. Children are escorted by one or more members of staff depending on the group size. Changing room supervision is under-taken by school staff and/or the DCC swimming teacher.

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area & Local Learning Area

General

Visits/activities within the 'School Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day (e.g. the school grounds and local woodlands) follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below)
- School Learning Area activities do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE. Local Learning Area activities are logged on EVOLVE's Local Area Visit section (it is good practice to inform parents of Local Learning Area visit)

Boundaries

The School Learning Area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- Garden areas on school site
- Activities at Dene Community School

The Local Learning Area includes, but is not limited to the following venues

- Manor Way and roads connecting to Manor Way as far as St Cuthbert's Church
- Yohden Way (without crossing) as far as the roundabout

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:

- Other people / members of the public / animals.
- Losing a pupil.
- Uneven surfaces and slips, trips, and falls.
- Weather conditions.
- Activity specific issues when doing environmental fieldwork (nettles, brambles, rubbish, etc).

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head/Deputy must be informed before a class leaves and when they return.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved.
- Minimum staffing ratios are adhered to
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practiced appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practiced standard techniques for road crossings in a group.
- Where appropriate, pupils are fully briefed on what to do if they become separated from the group.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- A mobile phone is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles)
- A mini First Aid kit is taken on each visit by a fully trained paediatric first aider

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For activities that take place during normal school hours, the visit leadership team will be aware of any relevant medical information for all participants, including staff.
4. For activities that take place outside normal school hours, the visit leadership team and the emergency contact/s will be aware of any relevant medical information and emergency contact information for all participants, including staff.
5. The visit leader/s and the base contact/s know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability, involves serious injury or fatality, or where it is likely to attract media attention.
6. For visits that take place outside the School Learning Area, the visit leader will carry an Emergency Card (EV7).
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.