



Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

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Learning Outside the Classroom Policy

Draft: July 2015 - Updated Feb 2026

Critical Incident phone numbers updated Feb 2026

Overview

At Mossley C.E. Primary school Equal Opportunities plays an integral part in all aspects of teaching and learning. Mossley C.E. Primary School acknowledges the great value of Educational Visits in broadening and enhancing both the learning and social experience of young people. Children should go on a variety of school visits whilst they are pupils at Mossley C.E. Primary School. Visits will support the work in the classroom and should be at least one per term.

The EVC for Mossley C.E. Primary School is Alexandra Ashford-Eaton.

The Headteacher, Helen Harrison will keep the Governing Body aware of its Educational Visits via the normal Head to Governors reporting process.

Policy Statement

This policy applies to all employees, Council Members, contractors, school governors, head teachers, young people, pupils, volunteers, visitors and partner organisations, where the Council has control over or overall responsibility for their activities.

Aims and purpose of the Policy

The aims of this policy are to ensure that employees and young people experience and enjoy a wide range of outdoor experiences and educational visits without being unduly exposed to a risk to their health and safety.

The purpose of the policy is to set out the management and procedures necessary for visit leaders to lead safe and successful activities, assessing risk to help participants to take part safely.

Relevant Legislation and Guidance

Regulations made under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 set out the actions that employees are required to take to ensure that staff and young people are not exposed to risks to their health and safety. In addition, the Department for Education has issued advice on legal duties for local authorities, head teachers, staff and governing bodies (June 2011, amended Feb 2014) regarding activities that take place on or off the educational premises, including trips.

HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils to develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives.

The law requires employees to:

- take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others who may be affected by what they do at work
- co-operate with their employers on health and safety matters
- do their work in accordance with instruction and training
- inform the employer of any work situation representing a serious and immediate danger, so that remedial action can be taken

- In addition, teachers and other staff have a common law duty to act as any prudent parent would do when in charge of pupils

The LOTC National Guidance can be found on the following web site: www.oeapng.info

Inclusion:

Under the Equality Act 2010 it is unlawful to discriminate against disabled participants because of their disability without material or substantial justification. The school is required to make reasonable adjustments to avoid participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Disability Discrimination Act does not require responsible bodies to place employees or participants at inappropriate risk if a health and safety issue arises.

Equality

Every effort should be made to ensure that LOTC activities are available and accessible to all, irrespective of any 'protected characteristic' as defined in The Equality Act 2010, i.e. disability, race, religion or belief, age, socio-economic disadvantage, special educational needs, disability, sex, sexual orientation or gender re-assignment. If a visit needs to cater for people with protected characteristics, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Equality should be promoted and addressed for all visits, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or reasonable adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Roles and Responsibilities

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

Governing bodies

A Governing body of Mossley C.E. Primary school should ensure that:

- To ensure that in the event of an incident, Critical Incident Response team (CIRT) personnel have access to registration and emergency contact information
- The establishment has a Visits policy which supports inclusion
- There are training opportunities for staff
- There are planning and approval procedures in place at establishment level
- There are monitoring procedures in place

Head Teachers

A head teacher should ensure that:

- Establishment practice follows National Guidance and the establishment policy
- The establishment has a designated and trained EVC
- All LOtC activities comply with National Guidance and are submitted for approval as required
- All staff involved in LOtC activities are appropriately trained and competent to carry out their allocated responsibilities
- All plans for LOtC activities have included consideration of key areas such as intended outcomes, best value, child protection, inclusion issues, risk-benefit analysis, medical needs, transport, insurance, contingency plans and emergency procedures

Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVCs)

EVCs should ensure that:

- They are specifically competent and experienced in LOtC and Educational Visits to support Visit Leaders in their preparation of an activity
- They have attended appropriate training for the role
- LOtC activities are led by competent and confident Visit Leaders. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competency is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view original documents and certificates when verifying qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.
- They disseminate training and information in the establishment to ensure that visit leaders have up to date knowledge and are accountable
- All plans for LOtC activities have included consideration of key areas such as intended outcomes, best value, child protection and safeguarding, inclusion, risk-benefit analysis, medical needs, transport, insurance, contingency plans and emergency procedures
- Support the head with approval and other decisions

Visit Leader

The visit leader must be a Cheshire East Council employee.

The visit leader should ensure that:

- They are specifically competent, qualified and experienced to lead the LOtC activity they are planning.
- They have received appropriate training (e.g. visit leader training)
- They can demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards and recognised good practice
- They have appropriate qualifications and knowledge of the activity area

- They plan and prepare all aspects of the LOfC activity or Educational Visit, taking a lead on risk-benefit assessment, define roles and responsibilities of other staff, provide appropriate information to parents and group members and ensure that the visit is effectively supervised
- Plan a clear and transparent itinerary and risk benefit assessment
- Upload the visit onto Evolve ensuring enough time for EVC and Head to review and submit within specified timeframe
- They have fully briefed any assistant leaders and other adult helpers involved in the activity. If the staff team includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, ensure there are adequate safeguards so that this will not compromise group management
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed
- Ensure the activity/visit is effectively supervised, and duty of care practiced at all times, the duty of care can not be delegated to a third party provider
- For visits that take place outside normal school hours, the Emergency Card must be with the Visit Leader at all times
- Ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details
- Report any accidents, incidents or near-misses
- For all visits there should be a responsible adult with a good working knowledge of first aid appropriate to the environment and visits beyond the local environment there must be a qualified first aider

Home Contact

- For visits that take place outside normal school hours, the Emergency Card – Home Contacts must be with the emergency home contacts at all times.

Volunteer Adult Helper

A volunteer adult helper should ensure that:

- They understand their role, responsibilities and limitations with regards to the activity they are supporting
- They have been fully briefed about the activity and group members

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise a close relation to a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment.

Arrangements for LOtC activities

Approval of visits:

The following visit types are 'authorised' within the school and then 'checked and approved' by Edsential via EVOLVE:

A – overseas

B – residential

C – involving an adventurous activity

Approval is delegated to the Head for visits which are not in the visit categories highlighted A,B or C

In order to fulfil the aims and objectives of this policy the following arrangements should be implemented:

Planning

Planning for an activity should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on school procedures and National Guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, must be competent and have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any external providers (making full use of national accreditation schemes that ensure that a provider has been subject to a credible inspection regime).
- Designated emergency contact(s) and procedures have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.
- Alternative arrangements (Plan B) should be included within the planning process where appropriate.
- Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them. This includes any 'rules' that will be in place. These should be re-emphasised as appropriate during the visit

Outcomes:

If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigor, then it will be essential that these outcomes are identified, and appropriately targeted. Up to four intended outcomes

must be recorded on Evolve during the planning process and can be used for subsequent evaluation. This includes:

- Relationships
- Emotional & Spiritual
- Cross curricular
- Individual
- Teamwork
- Environmental

A record of these outcomes will help to keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a “Risk Benefit Analysis”.

Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All LOtC activities should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk-benefit management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit to the activity venue.

Where an LOtC activity is from an external provider, they must ensure that the commissioned agent has either adopted Cheshire East Council policy and LOtC National Guidance or has systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by LOtC National Guidance.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of any nationally accredited provider assurance schemes that are now available, thus reducing bureaucracy.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

Where a provider holds the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances.

If they are not appropriately accredited, visit leaders have the responsibility of conducting a thorough assessment of the service offered by the external provider, including ensuring that activities will be delivered safely (adhering to National Governing Body guidelines as

appropriate), that safety and fire procedures are in place and that external provider staff are DBS checked.

Procedure when a provider **does not** hold an LOtC badge:

- Email the Provider Statement Form to the provider
- The provider must email the completed form back to you.
- When the form has been returned, check that it has been satisfactorily completed
- Keep the Provider Form on file together with all other relevant documentation
- Attach the Provider Form to EVOLVE

Threat From Terrorism

Precautions which you should include in your risk based assessment:

- Is the trip necessary in order to achieve the learning identified?
- Is the trip destination the safest possible choice – have others been considered?
- Does the risk assessment include guidance for party members to be vigilant at all times and report anything suspicious?
- If appropriate, take the school credit card to cover emergencies.
- A contingency plan should an emergency occur.

It is sensible to:

- Be aware of the latest news relating to your destination.
- In the UK, know the current threat level (available at: <https://www.mi5.gov.uk/threat-levels.>)
- When travelling abroad check the FCO website www.fco.gov.uk in the early stages of visit planning, at regular intervals and immediately prior to leaving.
- Consider the threat of terrorism as part of the visit risk management and include it within visit emergency plans.

When visiting crowded places such as a major city, venue or event, where the risk of attack may be greater, consider within your planning:

- Possible safe areas or venues, near where you intend to be, that you could use as an emergency shelter.
- How to minimise waiting time at busy venues. Where to wait and gather for head counts.
- How to minimise queuing times (such as not carrying unnecessary items) to speed up search and entry.

- Are staff phones charged and numbers shared?
- Do all leaders have all group information? Will they be spaced apart?
- A contact card for all participants giving a number to call if separated from the group, and the name and telephone number of the establishment.
- Contingency plan and how to get away in an emergency.
- Do you need to leave the site immediately with the crowd at the end of the visit event?
- How the leadership team might manage an enforced group split.

During the visit:

- Be vigilant and aware of your surroundings – know where the exits are and where you would run to.
- Avoid congregating too long around entrances to major public sites.
- At ports and airports don't linger unnecessarily on the public side of security screening.

Consent Forms

When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the establishment and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed of where their child will be at all times and of any extra measures required. Written consent is only required for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those taking place outside of school hours

Where parents do not give consent for their child to attend a trip for, whatever reason; the child will remain in school, during school hours. The child will join another year group for the duration of the trip and complete differentiated work.

Notification and approval of LOTC Activities and Visits

The Council has an online notification and approval system for LOTC activities, including Duke of Edinburgh trips (EVOLVE). A key feature of this system is that LOTC activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Local Authority.

A minimum notice time of four working weeks is required by the local authority for LOTC activities requiring approval. However, establishments planning major visits, particularly those involving the commitment of non-returnable deposits, the use of providers not recognised by the local authority or ABTA, or trips to remote countries, should notify the local authority before any financial commitment is made.

Please plan and submit 6 weeks before. Governors will also see risk assessments at curriculum meetings and some trips will require their consent e.g. residential/ significant risks/ trips near water.

Local Area Visits

These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by a school's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect of the trip. They can be considered as lessons in a different classroom.

Visits/activities within the 'Local Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- must be recorded on EVOLVE via the 'Local Area Visit' module.
- do not require parental consent. *(Although in most cases, parents will receive notification via email from the office).*
- do not normally need additional risk assessments / notes

These are managed by a combination of the following:

- The Head must give verbal approval before a group leaves.
- Only staff judged competent to supervise groups in this environment are approved. A current list of approved staff is maintained by the EVC and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'Local Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.
- Regular handwashing or regular hand sanitising is in place
- Students are briefed on keeping their distance from members of the public
- The selected route takes the least busy option
- Use antibacterial wipes to clean any equipment before use
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.
- *The STAGER model will be used (Staff, Time, Activity, Group, Environment, Remoteness) will be used to inform ratios*
- 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.
- All remotely supervised work in the Local Learning Area is suspended.
- 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.
- Staff will record the activity on EVOLVE (Local Area Visit module)
- A mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, facemasks bag for waste, tissues etc.)

Risk- Benefit Analysis

The notification and approval system requires the preparation of a risk - benefit analysis. A risk-benefit analysis approach considers the targeted benefits and learning outcomes against any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) to provide an acceptable level of risk.

The risk-benefit analysis should be shared with accompanying staff and trip members. It is important that young people are involved in the risk – benefit assessment and exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

Sufficient control measures should be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual, or harm several people. The content of the risk - benefit assessment process should include consideration of the degree of complexity of a particular activity and should reflect several variables that can impact on any given activity:

- Staffing requirements (qualifications/experience/competency/ratios)
- Time (time of year/ time of day/time spent at education place)
- Activity characteristics (specialist/ licensable/adventurous/insurance issues)
- Group characteristics (experience/ability/behaviour/special and medical needs)
- Environmental conditions (familiarity/impact of weather/water levels)
- Remoteness (transport/ residential/local/access to summoning help in emergency – wifi/ communication between group and base)

This is known as the “STAGER” model

At Mossley CE Primary School the following ratios for learning outside the classroom apply:

Reception – 1 adult to every 6 children.

Years 1, 2 and 3 - 1 adult to every 6 children.

Years 4, 5 and 6 – 1 adult to every 10 children.

Any adults who provide 1:1 support to a child must be included in addition to the above ratios.

Effective Supervision

The visit leader retains a “higher duty of care” for the group at all times, even when the activity may be being led by an external provider.

The visit leader should consider how the group is to be supervised, e.g. head counts, buddy systems, close or remote supervision, group sizes. The visit leader should ensure that the group continues to be appropriately supervised during downtime, and in the case of residential trips, at night time.

Transport

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. All national and local regulatory requirements must be followed.

The visit leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, the Head must provide approval and there should be recorded procedures and a risk assessment conducted. Parental consent must be given.

Charging

Head teacher, EVC and visit leaders must take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

Vetting and DBS checks

Cheshire East Council employees who work frequently or intensively with, or have regular access to young people or vulnerable adults, must undergo a DBS check as part of their recruitment process.

For the purposes of this guidance:

- frequently is defined as "once a week or more"
- intensively is defined as 4 days or more in a month or overnight

However, it must be clearly understood that a DBS check (or other vetting procedure) in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Careful consideration should be given to whether a voluntary helper may require a DBS check. In general terms, those helpers with frequent or intensive contact should be checked.

The responsibility for confirming that a deliverer or helper has been DBS checked rests with the organisation that is procuring the activity. DBS checks need to be updated as advised by Ofsted guidance.

Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and Cheshire East Council holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. Cheshire East Council also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, as a result of the Council's negligence. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

Some level of Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all Cheshire East Council employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident. However, Visit/ Activity Leaders should be advised that they should consider taking out less limited personal accident cover privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

Visit leaders should contact the local authority Insurance section to seek clarification of the above, including any circumstances requiring early notification of specialist activities to the insurer. They should also ensure they have obtained current information regarding any special policies that may be available to offer more comprehensive cover.

Critical Incident Support

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group involved in LOTC or an Educational Visit may:

- suffer a life threatening injury or fatality;
- be at serious risk;
- go missing for a significant and unacceptable period.

As an employer, Cheshire East Council is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments in the event of a critical incident.

In order to activate support from Cheshire East Council the telephone numbers listed in the appendix should be used.

These numbers should be carried by leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

Contact details and useful addresses

Strategic Lead for LOTC and Educational School Visits for Cheshire East Council

**Edsential LOTC Advice and Guidance telephone number:
0151 541 2170 Ext 4**

Edsential LOTC Advisers:

Kate Lodge

kate.lodge@edsential.co.uk

0771 0706176

Jon Thorpe

jon.thorpe@edsential.co.uk

0771 0706187

Bethan Cooper

bethan.cooper@edsential.co.uk

0771 0707125

For administrative or Evolve queries please contact:

Jane Pepper

jane.pepper@edsential.co.uk

0771 0706181

[Whistleblowing: Please use whistleblowing concern form
http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/system_pages/information_for_staff/whistleblowing/whistleblowing.aspx](http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/system_pages/information_for_staff/whistleblowing/whistleblowing.aspx)

National Guidance www.oeapng.info

National Library www.national-library.info

LOtC www.lotc.org.uk

LOtC Quality Mark www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk

Outdoor Education www.oeap.info