

# LONG MEADOW SCHOOL

## EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY



Date of last review:	January 2023
Date of next review:	January 2026
Type of policy:	Non-Statutory
Frequency of review:	Every 3 years
Governor committee:	Environment Committee

## **LONG MEADOW SCHOOL EDUCATIONAL VISITS GUIDANCE**

At Long Meadow School we feel that school visits play a vital part in an exciting, stimulating and creative curriculum. As a result, the aim of this guidance is to help those who are planning a visit, to ensure continuity in the organisation of visits and therefore to minimise potential risks. Responsibility for the visits and journeys is overseen by a qualified Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) supported by the headteacher and the Governing Body.

This policy applies to activities taking place within and outside of normal school hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

### **The Purpose of School Visits**

At Long Meadow School we believe the aim of a school visit is:

- to enhance classroom activities
- to provide 'hands on' opportunities
- to enable the children to visit and experience a different place, increasing their cultural capital
- to motivate and stimulate new learning
- to provide knowledge and resources
- to be enjoyable and promote social skills
- to broaden experiences.
- to teach life skills

These form an integral part of our approach to furthering our pupils' education and personal growth.

### **Curriculum links**

For each subject in the curriculum there may be a corresponding programme of activities (which includes visits to the school by specialists). These could include;

- English – theatre visits, visits by authors, poets and theatre groups;
- Science – use of the school grounds, visits to botanical gardens;
- Mathematics – use of shape and number trails in the local environment;
- History – castle visits, study of local housing patterns, local museums;
- Geography – use of the locality for fieldwork, village trails;
- Art and design – art gallery visits, use of the locality;
- PE – a range of sporting fixtures, extra-curricular activities, visits by specialist coaches;
- Music – a variety of specialist music teaching, extra-curricular activities, local schools' orchestra, concerts for parents to hear;
- Design and technology – visits to local factories or design centres;
- ICT – its use in local shops/libraries/secondary schools etc;
- RE – visits to local centres of worship, visits by local clergy.
- PSHE and citizenship – visit to the fire station or an old people's residential home, visits by local police officers and health workers.

## The Nature of School Visits

- **Local Visits** (those within walking distance of the school or short minibus journey/ visits to local schools)
- **Sporting activities**
- **Day Visits** (those needing a coach or minibus other than visit to sports fixtures/other local schools)
- **Adventurous and recreational activities**
- **Residential Visits** (Currently in Years 3, 4,5 and 6 with year 2 completing Night under the stars) The residential visit enables children to take part in outdoor and adventure activities as part of their PE work, as well as having links with PSHE, Science and Geography. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.
- **Trips abroad organised by the school**

The school aims for children to have at least 5 off-site visits per year, one of which needs to be a significant visit on a coach/train.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's guidance on health and safety on educational visits, and the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Equality Act 2010
- SEND Code of Practice
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022

## How visits are authorised

### EVOLVE

Permission for all Day and Residential visits needs to be sought via Evolve (passwords and log ins from the EVC).

Once submitted to Evolve, the trip is first approved by the EVC, then the HT

## Types of Visit

### Level One Visits – Use Evolve

- Not residential – usually day trips
- Coach or minibus (with minibus, organisers responsible for planning and form completion)
- Not adventurous – see list on Evolve
- Minimum 14 days notice

### Level Two Visits – Use Evolve

- Residential – need to go to LA for approval
- Minimum 6 weeks notice

### Level Three Visits – Use Evolve

- Adventurous Activities– See appendix 3 of policy – Need to go to two LA departments
- Minimum 6 weeks notice

### **Additional Forms Required for Residentials**

- Parental consent forms for Residentials – Available on EVOLVE
- Form 3B – Residential Checklist for staff prior to visit – in file in office
- First Aid form – Available on EVOLVE
- Emergency – Available on EVOLVE
- Medication Given - Available on EVOLVE

The school's educational visits coordinator, who may be the headteacher, will be involved in the planning and management of off-site visits. S/he will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed;
- support the headteacher and governing body in their decisions on approval;
- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips;
- organise related staff training;
- verify that all accompanying adults, including private car drivers, have had satisfactory police checks, and that the letter from our coach company assures us their drivers too have had safeguarding checks;
- make sure that all necessary permissions and medical forms are obtained;
- keep records of visits, and ensure there are regular generic assessments of the risks (for example road-crossing) where there are frequent visits to local venues (for example a swimming facility).

Staff arranging or otherwise involved in off-site activities must familiarise themselves with the regulations, advice and procedures published by the LA (and available from the school office). All off-site activities must take place in accordance with the LA's instructions.

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must seek and obtain the approval of the EVC before any commitment is made on behalf of the school. A comprehensive visit plan should be provided by the member of staff to allow for an informed decision to be made.

Where the activity involves a period of more than 24 hours, an overnight stay, or a journey by sea or air, the headteacher will seek the approval of the governing body and the Local Education Authority before permitting the activity to take place.

### **Visit Leader**

One person will be the visit leader, they will have overall responsibility for visit arrangements and the children and adults participating in the visit. They will need to have been trained by the EVC prior to leading a visit

There is also a designated person remaining at school who is described as the 'home contact'. On day visits this is the office staff, on residentials it is the head/deputy. It is their responsibility to deal with phone calls from the group leader and to set emergency procedures into motion should the need arise.

### **Choosing a Place to Visit**

Teachers will use experience of place they have visited before or follow up recommendations made by colleagues at other schools.

When choosing a place to visit certain things need to be taken into account such as subjects accessed, age suitability, cost, cost of transport, distance, help needed. It is useful to gather as much information as possible so that you can produce a very clear outline of what the visit will include.

It is important that the Visit Leader makes arrangements to assess the place to visit to check: suitability, fitness for purpose and risk assessment.

The Visit Leader needs to check with the Headteacher that adequate insurance cover is available for the type of visit planned.

### **Costing**

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

- transport;
- entrance fees;
- insurance;
- provision of any special resources or equipment;
- costs related to adult helpers;
- any refreshments the school has opted to pay for.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions (voluntary except in the case of residential visits). This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage.

No child may be excluded from an activity because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle through the school prospectus and letters sent home about intended visits.

The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the Headteacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time

### **Transport**

When booking a coach we have agreed that it must have seatbelts. Details of coach companies previously used and prices may be found in the office. Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party. It is our policy only to use coaches fitted with seat or lap belts, and to insist that they be worn by all those participating in the visit.

Where private cars are used for transport, the group Leader is responsible for checking that the insurance of each driver covers such journeys, and double-checking that each driver has been subject to the normal safeguarding checks.

Our minibus meets LA guidelines, and each seat has a belt. We instruct all children, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach, to attach their seat belts.

Please also refer to the;

- Minibus Policy
- Minibus Risk Assessment
- coach Risk Assessment

### **Informing Parents/carers about a Visit**

The parents of children taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit.

A letter needs to be sent to the parents of children participating in a school visit **at least** four weeks before the visit is to take place. (This is to ensure that sufficient funding is received for the visit to go ahead – if this is not the case the visit will need to be cancelled one week before departure.) The letter needs to include the following:

- \* purpose of visit
- \* date / time of visit / location
- \* cost/charging clause
- \* transport details
- \* summary programme of the day
- \* lunch arrangements
- \* any special clothing or equipment needed
- \* whether 'pocket money' is allowed
- \* whether help is needed and how to volunteer
- \* For residential visits a proforma to be signed declaring that the contents of the letter has been read and accepted, that permission is given for their child to participate in the visit, and that they are medically fit to do so. They should give a name and telephone number of someone who can be contacted for the child on the day/s of the visit should an emergency occur.

For residential visits a deadline is set for the return of forms and deposits at which point names will be drawn from a hat until all places are filled and a reserve list drawn up.

Parents of children attending the residential visit must attend a pre-visit parents meeting in order for the child to be permitted to take part in a residential visit.

### **Organisation of Groups**

#### **Adult Volunteers**

Where appropriate, parents and carers may be asked to volunteer to attend and supervise pupils alongside staff members on trips. Where more parents/carers volunteer than required on the visit, those invited to attend will be selected as fairly and transparently as possible, whilst taking into consideration:

- The needs of the pupils going on the trip
- The setting and circumstances of the trip
- Volunteers' skills, attitude and past behaviour, including previous volunteer experience

Parents/carers selected to volunteer will be informed at least 2 weeks ahead of the visit, and asked to confirm their attendance in writing.

Volunteers will receive a full induction from staff members on the day of the visit, prior

to departure, including on their responsibilities, expected behaviour, the process for raising concerns, emergency procedures and contact details, and the expected timetable of the trip.

Where practical and as required by the nature of visits (i.e. when volunteers may be left with children without staff members present), volunteers may be asked or required to undergo safeguarding checks, including DBS checks.

At no point will volunteers on whom no safeguarding checks have been carried out be left alone with pupils or given sole responsibility for the care of a pupil.

Do not place the children of volunteers in the same group as their parent. During the visit helpers should keep a designated person in sight e.g. class teacher or visit leader.

### **Staff ratios and first aid**

Risk assessments for each visit will ascertain the safe level of supervision required. On all educational visits, we will make sure:

- At least 1 male and 1 female supervising adult is present (for mixed pupil groups)
- At least 1 supervising adult able to administer first aid is present on all trips
- For EYFS visits, at least 1 qualified paediatric first aider is present on all trips
- Appropriate first aid equipment will be taken on all trips, in accordance with the school's first aid and health and safety policies.
- One teacher should carry the first aid kit with them and helpers should be informed of this. It is also advisable to take a bucket, tissues and a change of clothes.
- The visit leader should carry with them a list of any essential medical details relating to any of the children in their care and any appropriate medicines, inhalers, injections etc., that are clearly labelled with the child's name and dosage requirements. Incidents need to be recorded and parents informed upon return.
- All supervising adults will be made aware of any medical issues or allergies at the start of the trip
- Adults without a DBS check will not be left alone with pupils at any time
- The trip lead will take regular headcounts and/or rollcalls

In KS2 the acceptable ratio of adults to children on a school visit is usually 1:15, 1:10 in KS1 and 1:6 for early years. Leaders will need to assess this ratio guidance depending on the activity being undertaken.

Children usually will wear their school uniform on day visits unless it is a themed visit e.g. Victorian clothing.

An updated list of those attending the visit will need to be left at school and arrangements will need to be made for those children not participating. The visit leader should keep a master copy of this information with them.

### **Emergency procedures and incident reporting**

Generally, emergency planning will be defined as planning for:

- Serious and unexpected risk
- Serious and life-threatening injury
- Individuals going missing
- A serious breach of safeguarding expectations

The trip leader will be familiar with these plans for each visit.

In the case of an emergency, the trip leader or other supervising adult will contact the school office. The school office will then contact parents/carers as required, and inform them of changes to plans or cancellations of trips and/or alternative travel plans. This will form part of a wider communication plan that covers how routine communications should be handled in such situations.

This may also include the type of injury where the parents need to be contacted to collect a child or to meet the child at a hospital. (It is suggested that the school contact does this rather than the visit leader as they can explain the situation calmly and clearly without having to worry about the rest of the group.)

1 member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

In a case of a pupil being unaccounted for, the trip leader will search the area while another member of staff remains in charge of other pupils. In the unlikely event that a pupil cannot be found within 30 minutes, the trip leader will contact the school office who will notify the parents/carers. The trip leader will then contact the police and provide them with the relevant information so they can take over the search, staying with them to comfort the pupil when found. The remaining staff and adults will return to the school with the rest of the pupils.

All incidents and accidents will be reported in line with our health and safety policy, including required reporting to Ofsted and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

Smaller incidents, accidents or near misses that do not require external reporting will still be covered by an internal report, to include steps that can be taken in the future to avoid similar incidents.

There will also be a clear process for evaluating all visits and trips once they have been concluded from the planning through to the visit itself. This will help with evaluating whether planning worked and to learn from any incidents that took place.

## **Risk Assessments**

The school have produced several generic risk assessments for visits including:

- Shenley Wood, Shenley Church End, Coach journey, Tattenhoe, Howe Park Wood, Car Journey, Historic building, Nature area, Woburn Estate, Local Walking Visits, Minibus use.

A comprehensive risk assessment is carried out by the group leader before the proposed visit. It will assess the risks which might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- What are the hazards?
- Who might be affected by them?
- What safety measures are needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level?
- Can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- What steps will be taken in an emergency?



Staff planning an off-site activity should make a preliminary visit to the venue, in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. It is important to take into account the probable weather conditions at the time of year proposed for the trip, and the party leader should take careful account of the facilities available, with due regard to the proposed size of the group. They should also assess the site's suitability with regard to the age and any particular needs of the children. They will also consider the venue's own approach to security and to health and safety. Venues providing instructor-led activities will have their own risk assessments for particular sessions, and these assessments may be adopted if it is impractical for the group Leader to experience the activity beforehand, or if s/he lacks the skills required to make informed judgements about the risks it may involve.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the Visit Plan must state both the extent of any risks involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate them. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

An activity should normally have sufficient adults taking part to provide the correct ratios. Any trip will require a minimum of two adults. However, these are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases.

The risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue. The coach company we use on a regular basis has provided us with a letter detailing all the health and safety measures it routinely takes, including:

- the provision and required use of seat belts and booster seats (if required);
- proper vetting of the driver by the police;
- proper insurance for the driver;
- details of first aid and emergency equipment;
- breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check that all adults helping to supervise the trip have been subject to appropriate safeguarding checks

A copy of the completed risk assessment will be uploaded to EVOLVE and then given to all adults supervising the trip.

### **Use of external organisations**

As part of the risk assessment process, we will check that any external organisations providing an activity have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.

This includes checking that organisation hold the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge. Where an organisation does not, we will check additional details as outlined in the DfE's guidance on health and safety on educational visits to make sure it's an appropriate organisation to use.

We will have a written agreement in place with each external organisation outlining what everyone is responsible for during the activity.

For visits abroad, we will make sure that any organisation providing activities hold the LOtC Quality badge or similar local accreditation. We will follow the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's overseas travel guidance and foreign travel advice when organising these visits.

### **Further health and safety considerations**

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the party leader, of the emergency procedures which will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal school day the home telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a party leaves school, the school office should be provided with a list of everyone, children and adults, travelling with the party, together with a programme and timetable for the activity.

The safety of the party, and especially the children, is of paramount importance. During the activity the party leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that children are both safe and well looked after at all times.

### **Participation and inclusion**

All pupils, regardless of background or abilities, should be able to take part in every aspect of our school life, including visits.

If a pupil with a disability, statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education health and care (EHC) plan, or any other specific needs (e.g. medical conditions including allergies) is participating in the visit, they will have the same support that is available to them during the school day.

We will adjust the trip programme where necessary, working with parents/carers to provide additional support, making reasonable adjustments to itineraries, providing additional support staff, and other adjustments as appropriate.

Additional risk assessments may be carried out to ensure the safety of all staff and pupils

Behaviour of the highest quality is expected at Long Meadow School. Children who persistently break the 'Golden Rules' may not be permitted to participate in off-site visits. (see Behaviour Policy)

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of themselves others or the good name of the school, the party leader should discuss with the headteacher the possibility of making additional arrangements for that child

Children Looked After (CLA) are encouraged to participate in residential visits. The school is aware that CLA may need additional support during a visit. Staff members planning a visit may wish to consult with the Designated Person for CLA.

**Mobile Phones**

Mobile phones are not permitted to be carried by any child on any school visit.

**Monitoring, review and evaluation**

Visit leaders are encouraged to review visits, taking into account the successful and less successful parts of the visit, and considering ways in which the visit could have been improved. Informal conversations might take place between the visit leader(s) and the EVC or Headteacher regarding the outcome of the visit. It would be useful to record an evaluation of the day's visit on EVOLVE

It is hoped that by following this policy we can engage in purposeful, safe and enjoyable visits from Long Meadow School.

This policy is monitored by the governing body and will be reviewed every 3 years, or before if necessary.