

Educational Visits Policy



Person Responsible for Policy:
Claire McKinney (Head Teacher)

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Autumn 2025

Date of next review:
Autumn 2026

Definition

This policy refers to all Educational Visits from Richard Avenue Primary School (RAPS); by definition this means any visit by pupils outside the curtilage of the school boundary. The term 'Visits off site' (VOS) will be used to describe such visits.

The LA policy in context

Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) National Guidance

Sunderland City Council has adopted the national guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) on the website www.oeapeg.info. This provides detailed guidance about many aspects of off-site visits and outdoor learning, and includes Essential Reading for all key staff roles. Specific information can be found by using the site's search function. Schools, Council services and all Council employees must follow that guidance as well as the requirements of this Code of Practice and other Council policies. Should there be any conflicting areas, then the Council's policies must be followed, and clarification should be sought from either the External Visit Advisory

Service or the Corporate H&S Team. Richard Avenue Primary School (RAPS) works within the above Guidance and LA Code of Practice (Document 3.45)

Risk Assessment

Risk Assessment of VOS is a legal requirement. RAPS will use the STAGER Risk Assessment proforma available to staff on the shared drive to record significant risk. This completed form will be viewed and approved by the Headteacher and Education Visits Coordinator (EVC) for all visits off site – except where the visits are of a short/local nature, where a generic risk assessment has been created by RAPS and discussed with the EVC for each visit undertaken.

Farm Visits

For farm visits, note that pregnant women, the very young (under 5's) and those with immune deficiency conditions .e.g. spleen removed, transplant patients, cancer patients, are at extra risk from infection by pathogenic micro-organisms. Extra OEAP guidance is available from the EVC for any farm visits.

Pupil Risk Assessment

Pupils in EYFS/KS1 & KS2 can undertake a pupil risk assessment as part of planned work in class, prior to a VOS. This enables pupils to actively participate in being more aware and to take age appropriate responsibility for keeping themselves safe, this helps to develop pupil resilience. Pupils to review risk assessment, if required.

Non-delegable duty of care (re: Woodlands V Essex County Council 2013)

RAPS has a Non-delegable duty of care in certain circumstances, which include - curriculum related activities in school time e.g. Swimming. This means that the school can be held liable for the negligence of the provider, even if the school itself is not negligent.

Information to parents

The DfE advice confirms the fact that written consent is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities which happen during the school day, and includes a 'one-off' consent form that schools can use for other activities. The OEAP National Guidance recognises this, (January 2020. Document 4.3d) As does the Education Act 2002 Section 29.)

RAPS uses a 'Notification of Educational Visit' form and 'Notification of Visit using cars as transport' form (appendix 3) to:

1. inform parents of what visits their children are involved in,
2. to make explicit the learning that pupils are engaged in (thus, how parents may support and encourage this),
3. to identify to parents what the 'voluntary contribution' is, to support the visit.

Costing and Charging

Costing will be according to the nature of the VOS, this will affect the charge made in terms of a voluntary contribution. All monies will be accounted for by the school office and parents will make any payments online using the Arbor App once a visit has been set up by the school office.

Parents will be asked for voluntary contributions towards the cost of the visit – because, to fund such worthwhile visits from the schools limited resources would be extremely difficult.

The school reserves the right to cancel any VOS if it becomes apparent that financially it is not viable.

Derwent Hill costs need to be paid in full before the visit takes place. The 'Friends of Derwent Hill' fund exists for parents who experience a 'difficulty' in their child attending Derwent Hill for a residential visit and this may well include a 'financial' reason.

School Dinners and VOS

Staff need to inform the office, with at least 2 weeks notice if dinners will need to be canceled because of a VOS. In this case, staff must ensure that parents are given the option to request a packed lunch if they are in KS 1 and any KS 2 children in receipt of free school meals. There is a letter template for this on the shared drive. Staff will inform the school office using Office Notification of VOS proforma available on the shared drive.

Notification and Approval of Visits (Category 2 & 3)

Staff who are arranging a visit are expected to fill in the “Google Form” which will notify the EVC of the intended visit. This will also provide much of the information required for the EVOLVE form. The EVC is responsible for identifying Category 2 & 3 visits.

For category Category 2 & 3 visits, Evolve must be used. The EVC will be responsible for overseeing the use of Evolve at RAPS. For the purposes of notification and approval, external visits are classified into three categories.

The Evolve online system is used for notification, approval and monitoring of visits, it is managed by LA / EVAS. EVCs and 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. At RAPS the Chair of Governors will be notified of all Category 3 visits and will be kept updated of all visits that have taken place.

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Category Definition Requirement for notification & approval

Category	Definition	Requirement for notification and approval
Category 1	<p>Straightforward routine visits defined as Category 1 in a written policy by the school or service concerned, covered by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a generic risk assessment, regularly reviewed • Written consent is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities which happen during the school day (further clarification on EVOLVE). • school operating procedures 	Evolve may be used but is not required.
Category 2	<p>Visits requiring enhanced planning with event specific risk assessment, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All residential visits not in Category 3 • Non-residential visits not in Categories 1 or 3 	Must be authorised by the Headteacher, using Evolve. This provides automatic notification to the Council of the visit. EVC will log all category 2 visits on EVOLVE.
Category 3	<p>Higher risk visits, defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits outside the UK • Visits which include adventure activities • Visits to remote or hazardous locations 	Must be authorised by the Headteacher using Evolve at least four weeks before the visit, and then approved by the Council. EVC will log all category 3 visits on EVOLVE and on the central visits database.

Staffing Ratios for visits

OEAP National Guidance outlines for example, ‘the DfES publication HASPEV (1998) suggested the following “starting points”:

- School years 1 - 3, 1:6
- School years 4 - 6, 1:10/15

They also state that *‘these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive, as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements.’*

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing.

Age 3+, 1:8 or 1:13 depending on setting, time of day and staff qualifications.

RAPS accepts this guidance and operates with the following starting points.

Year Group	RAPS suggested Ratio	Guidance
Nur - Rec	1:5	1:5 HASPEV Framework 1:8 EYFS Statutory
Y1- Y3	1:6	1:6 HASPEV
Y4 -Y6	1:10/15	1:10/15 HASPEV

Learning Objectives on a VOS (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. This debrief will take place between the visit leader and the EVC. The EVC will ensure that all evaluations of VOS are logged on the EVOLVE system.

The Ofsted report "Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?" (October 2008) (available on the OEAP National Guidance website) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of Learning Outside the Classroom, including the fact that it raises achievement.

However, it also highlights the finding that Learning Outside the Classroom is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigour.

RAPS ensures that all learning Outside the classroom is linked to learning within the classroom and that these links are made explicit to the pupils both before and after the VOS has taken place.

Emergency Procedures

On each visit an **RAPS Emergency Action Card** will be carried by staff (a copy will be kept in the first aid kit). The 'Emergency Action Card' will be used for guidance by staff in the event of an emergency.

This is a requirement and it is the role of EVC to ensure that the correct procedure cards are available in all first aid kits. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that the card is readily available during the visit.

The Emergency Action Card can be used by staff to make notes of any incidents. If this is the case, staff must ensure that a used card is replaced with a blank card available in the school office.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

All schools which provide External Visits must have an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) in post. The role of the EVC is described in the OEAP National Guidance. EVCs must undertake an EVC training course and a refresher / revalidation course every three years, both of which are provided by the External Visits Advisory Service.

The course includes training on visit planning, risk assessment, leader competence and required procedures. **Andrew Warkman** is the named EVC at RAPS.

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 and on the Evolve system at www.sunderlandvisits.org.uk
- monitors and approves visits using the Evolve online system
- provides training for EVCs, Visit Leaders and Group Leaders.

Leader competence and approval

- A Visit Leader is the person responsible for planning and leading a visit, 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.
- Headteachers / Service Managers must ensure that Visit Leaders and Group Leaders are competent to carry out their responsibilities.

Parents

RAPS encourages parental support on VOS as part of staffing ratios – all parents must be briefed prior to the visit so that they have a clear role, in order that they can impact upon safety and support pupil learning.

- Parents will be brought into school from the yard.
- Parents will be briefed in school by a member of staff or the visit leader if possible. Teachers will ensure that parents are made aware of the significant points of the VOS, this includes:
 - the educational purpose of the visit.
 - expectations of pupils.
 - expectations of parents and their role.
 - safety considerations such as walking on pavements/crossing roads & traffic. Seat belts being worn whilst vehicles are in motion. School staff managing pupils toileting in public places.

- o site specific considerations.
- o awareness of the risk assessment for the visit. Also, the fact that pupils have completed their own risk assessment. All staff and parents must sign the risk assessment to show that they have been briefed about the visit. This signed risk assessment will be retained by the EVC.

The group leader needs to take into consideration the role of parent helper and ensure that they are aware of their responsibility for the whole group. Group leaders must consider the implications of a parent or guardian's actions being influenced by the needs of their own child. For this reason, it would be appropriate for the group leader to consider if the parent will be placed in a group that would mean that they were not directly supervising their own child. (See OEAP Guidance 3.4m October 2021.)

Monitoring

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring the monitoring of visits organised by RAPS. 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 & 2 visits.
- a review with 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.

Significant events, Review and Debrief

A review of any 'Significant Events' will take place following a VOS with the VOS staff and the Headteacher & EVC. A proforma will be

completed and filed (separate proforma for day visits and residential visit).

Post VOS review

Any incidents

Insurance

- DfE Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) 108819 - School Journey Cover, this is like a 'domestic travel policy' - this covers...Any adult and any pupil traveling on an educational excursion . It includes some personal injury of a significant nature.
- Public Liability - this covers...Staff, pupils and parents, where a claim is made by the public against Sunderland City Council (if the council is proved negligent).
- Employer Liability - this covers Staff in terms of injury, if Sunderland City Council is proven to be negligent.
- Cars used as transport - if a child is transported in a car by a member of staff from RAPS their own 'Business User Clause' Insurance will apply to their car – Physical copy of Staff Insurance to be seen and checked by EVC.

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

RAPS will follow the Children's Services code of practice on responding to crises and critical incidents. Refer to RAPS Critical Incident Policy.

Mobile Phone (Safeguarding)

Staff will take a mobile phone on a VOS, their contact number will be recorded on the sign out sheet in the school office. This must be signed out from the school office and returned as soon as possible after the visit.

Visits Checklist

An educational visits checklist is available to all staff on the shared google folder. This document ensures a whole school consistent approach to organising an educational visit. It also ensures that the EVC is involved in the whole process and that information is stored using the central visits database and EVOLVE for category 2 and 3 visits.

Educational visitors to school

Richard Avenue Primary School recognises the vital role that visitors to school play in the enhancement of the curriculum. The EVC will be involved in the whole process.

All staff must ensure that a Visitor Information Sheet is sent to visitors before the visitor is due to attend the school. This will be available to all staff on the shared google folder. This sheet includes the need to provide DBS clearance and other photographic identification on the day of the visit. It also includes safeguarding and child protection information. Staff should also ensure that a “Google Form” is completed so that the EVC can be notified.

A visitors checklist is available to all staff on the shared google folder. This document allows visitors to be organised in a consistent way across the school and will support staff in ensuring that their visit is a success. Office staff will be responsible for checking that all documents are seen by the visitor and that they have the correct visitors badge as per the Safeguarding Policy.