

St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School



Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Policy

To be read in conjunction with the school's critical incident plan.

The Mission statement:

'St. John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School inspires students, spiritually and educationally forming them through Faith, so that they will achieve their aspirations and contribute to their community.'

Date of Policy: October 2021
Date of Ratification: February 2022
Date of Review: February 2023
Owner: J Douglas

Aims

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School strives to inspire students through an engaging and balanced curriculum. We aim to provide a safe, secure and happy environment where students can develop confidently in all aspects of school life. Staff should consider the educational aims and desired outcomes when planning an educational trip to ensure that it underpins the school ethos and curriculum.

Introduction

Carefully selected and planned educational visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment, and so form a key part of what makes **St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School** a supportive and effective learning environment.

External trips and visits provide our students with an opportunity to engage with the wider community and experience learning in a 'real life' context. Learning beyond the classroom can help students gain a better understanding of subject areas when they see theory become reality in a relevant and stimulating environment.

These opportunities boost student motivation and attainment. Being introduced to a variety of environments and situations supports the social, emotional, cultural, and spiritual development of the student as they gain awareness and understanding of others and the world around them.

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, **St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School**

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Guidance for Educational Visits and Related Activities with National Guidance & EVOLVE**' (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 this school policy, Local Authority policy, and National Guidelines. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

Types of Visits and Approval

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School will plan and organise a range of external educational visits throughout the academic year. Parents/carers will be notified of these opportunities through letter and Parentmail and written permission will be sought for out of area day visits, residential visits, overseas visits, or adventurous activities.

Types of visits to be arranged in support of the educational aims of the school:

1. **Non-residential visits within the UK that do not involve an adventurous activity.**

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Visits to museums
- Farms
- Theme parks
- Theatres
- Places of worship

The Visit Leader must **provisionally** plan and submit their trip proposal on EVOLVE, staff should follow the check list and procedure in the Appendices. The EVC and Finance Manager will receive the trip proposal and check details of the trip, including costs, before forwarding to the Head Teacher for final approval.

2. **Visits that are overseas, residential, or involve an *adventurous activity.**

These follow step 1. above, but the Head then submits the visit to the LA for approval.

**An 'adventurous activity' is "...one which is exciting and challenging and which involves significant inherent risk of harm, without which the activity would lose much of its value, or which takes place in a remote or hazardous location". OEAP (Outdoor Education Advisory Panel).*

These may include, but are not limited to:

- Camping
- Rock climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Water sports (Canoeing/kayaking, sailing)
- Snow sports (skiing, snowboarding, including dry slope)
- Trampoline parks

At the start of the academic year, the PE department will request a one-off blanket consent for students regularly involved in offsite activities for the forthcoming year. The PE department will provide parents/carers with details of the planned fixtures. Further permission will be sought if additional fixtures are organised.

Roles and responsibilities

In accordance with DfE national guidance, the Headteacher has appointed a member of staff as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC). **The Head Teacher** has responsibility for authorising all visits and for submitting those that are overseas, residential, or adventurous to the LA for approval.

Visit Leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain **outline permission** for a visit from the **Head Teacher** prior to making any commitments. Visit Leaders have responsibility for ensuring that their visits will comply with all relevant guidance and requirements and should seek advice from the EVC where necessary.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will support 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 visit plans on EVOLVE before submitting them to the Head. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Governing Body will countersign any overseas or high-risk activities. An annual report of trips and visits will be made available to the Governors and can be accessed via 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.

Competence to Lead

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:

- A mentoring 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 Head Teacher 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.
- Staff leading visits overseas must be aware that they will be subject to the laws of the host country.

Educational Visits Checklist

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School's Educational Visits Checklist forms part of the risk management process for visits and off-site activities and may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources or found in the LOtC folder in the staff shared area. 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'.

Charging / funding for visits

St John Fisher Catholic Comprehensive School has a separate policy for 'charging and remissions' which apply to all educational visits. This can be found on our school website.

Inclusion

When planning visits the school sets out with the intention to include all eligible students. Consideration is taken of factors covered by the Equality Act 2010, such as disabilities and medical needs, all reasonably practicable steps are taken to ensure compliance and inclusivity.

Other factors such as behaviour are considered in line with the schools 'Behaviour Policy'. The school reserves the right to withdraw a student prior to, or during a visit if their conduct falls below the minimum standards expected as clearly outlined in the school behaviour policy. Parents/cares may be responsible for costs incurred should their child need to be collected during the course of a visit.

Transport

- The school maintains an updated list of staff who are qualified and approved to drive the school minibus.
- The Finance Manager is responsible for booking the minibus.
- It is the Visit Leader's responsibility to check students are wearing their seatbelts in accordance with the law prior to departure.
- Visit Leader's and accompanying staff are responsible for managing groups on public transport and should ensure students are adequately supervised at all times when using public transport.
- **Use of staff cars to transport pupils**

In some circumstances, for example, where pre-booked transport has not materialised, it may be necessary for staff to use their own vehicles to transport pupils.

Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport young people then this must be approved by the Headteacher, and a **PRIVATE CAR** Form must be completed and retained by the school on an annual basis. Staff will need Business Insurance cover on their vehicle policy.

Evaluation

Once a visit has taken place, the Visit Leader must complete the evaluation section on their EVOLVE form. This includes evaluating whether identified outcomes were met and whether the planning and risk assessments were effective.

The EVC may review any visit where it is felt that procedures or outcomes have not been satisfactory and suggest modifications as a result of findings or feedback from the visit.

Visit Leaders may be required to provide a written summary of their visit (including photographs) for promotional purposes.

Emergency procedures

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

The school's emergency plan on dealing with a critical incident during a visit is outlined on the following page.

All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

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 leadership team or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3. For **all** activities during and outside of normal school hours; the Visit Leader will leave a register of all students and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the contact details of Parents/Carers and medical information as provided on the consent slips.
4. Visit leaders will carry:
 - A school mobile phone with the school office number stored in the contacts.
 - An LA Emergency 'Card', containing the contact details of the appointed emergency school contacts. (See EVOLVE Resources).
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. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from Visit Leaders.