

THE FEDERATION OF GUARDIAN ANGELS' AND OUR LADY OF LOURDES RCPS EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

Policy approved by: Governors	Date: February 2026
Last reviewed: February 2024	
Next review: February 2028	

Mission Statement

We follow in the footsteps of Jesus to love, learn and grow.

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 Our Lady of Lourdes 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, Our Lady of Lourdes:

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 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.**

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.

Roles and responsibilities

Visit leaders are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE (where required). They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher 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 Mrs Julie Ensor 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 Head. 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'.

The Governing Body has delegated the consideration and approval of educational visits and other offsite activities to the Headteacher and has nominated an Educational Visits Governor, Mrs Caroline Carlon to liaise, as necessary, on behalf of the governing body.

The Headteacher will keep the Governing Body aware of its Educational Visits events & programme via the Headteacher's Report.

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.

Learning Outcomes

When making the decision to lead/plan an off-site activity it is essential to consider the justification for the visit, how it fits into the curriculum and what the pupils/students will gain from the experience i.e. what are the learning outcomes for the activity.

Risk Management

Risk management is an inherent part of visit planning. It should be proportionate to the complexity of the visit being undertaken and evidenced. The evidence may include:

- generic risk assessments/ operational procedures
- specific risk assessments
- other visit planning documents

Risk management is the responsibility of the whole staff team led by the visit leader. Refer to National Guidance: [Risk Management 4.3c, 4.3f, 4.3g](#)

Approval before contractual arrangements are made.

Visit Leaders must gain approval from the Executive Headteacher before any contractual arrangements or financial commitments are made. School must ensure that any overriding contractual arrangements are made between the School and the provider rather than between parents and provider.

Pre-visits.

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group requirements. Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. Please speak to the EVC to establish whether a preliminary visit is a requirement.

Ratios and supervision.

As part of assessing the risk of educational visits, outdoor learning and adventurous activities, visit leaders should determine the appropriate supervision arrangements by considering factors including **'STAGER'**:

- **Staffing**

- For example: Consider whether the adults have undertaken training, what level of experience they have and whether they know the group. Consider what level of competence is necessary (e.g. skill, knowledge, understanding, fitness) from all the supervising adults. Ensure that all adults are competent for the roles that are assigned to them.

- **Timing**

- For example: Consider the time of year, this could be the beginning of the academic year or the end of year with relationships differing. Daylight hours also vary throughout the year, does that affect the weather or travel conditions; what staff might need to carry? Religious/Festival days might have a reduction in facilities or transport timetables. Consider the availability of Base Contacts and their personal commitments.

- **Activity**
 - For example: Consider the nature of the intended activity and whether it requires specialist knowledge and/or equipment. Consider whether the activities might be affected by the location (crowds, remoteness, access etc.).
- **Group**
 - For example: Consider the characteristics of the group and what prior experience they have of the activity and environment; also consider their ability and maturity. If any of the group has behavioural, medical or learning needs, ensure that these can be managed appropriately.
- **Environment**
 - For example: Consider the impact that the weather may have on the group, activity or travel arrangements. Be aware that environmental conditions can change dramatically and ensure that there is a Plan B where appropriate. Where relevant to the location and activity, the visit leader must have a good understanding of how water levels can change and be able to make appropriate judgements.
- **Remoteness**
 - For example: Consider how far the activity or visit is from the normal support mechanisms of the school and whether it is close enough to rely on immediate support from the school, or further afield where it cannot. The type of transport being used may impact on the level of supervision required (e.g. a coach journey may require a smaller supervision ratio than a visit using public transport). If the visit involves an overnight stay, a higher level of first aid

Visit Management System

School has identified a local learning area and generic operating options for these activities. Visits outside this area must be managed on Evolve and approved by the EVC and/or Executive Headteacher.

Visits that do not require Employer approval should be submitted to the EVC in the time frame set out in the school's visit policy. Visits that do require Employer approval should be submitted by the Head to the Employer at least 20 working days prior to departure. Complex visits/activities should be discussed with the Educational Visits Adviser in the early planning stages.

Refer to [Appendix 4](#) for summary and approval deadlines.

Adventure activities run on the school site should also be planned and approved through the online system – refer to [Appendix 3](#) for a list of typical activities classed as adventurous for the purposes of this policy.

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 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 School'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.

In an emergency the Visit Leader (and accompanying staff) should follow the Visit Leader Emergency Action Card and the Emergency School/Base Contact should follow the Establishment Management Emergency Action Plan. Refer to 'Emergency Plan for Critical Incidents Educational Visits for Bury Schools, Academies and Colleges' on Evolve (www.buryvisits.org.uk)

The following should be in place for all visits:

Carried by Visit Leader & all accompanying staff:

- Group list
- All contact details (these may be held in school for local visits during school hours)
- Visit Leader Emergency Action Card
- Mobile phone
- Group first aid kit(s)

Held by Emergency Base Contact (e.g. head teacher/ senior leader back at school):

- Group list
- All contact details
- Emergency Action Cards:
 - Visit Leader Emergency Action Card
 - Base Contact Emergency Action Card (e.g. head/senior leader back at school)
- 24/7 access to all visit details

Staff should undergo training at an appropriate level to ensure that they understand the procedures. Emergency plans should be tested from time to time at both School level and employer level.

References and further guidance:

- Visit Emergency Training (Contact the adviser)
- Bury Council's Emergency Plan for Critical Incidents on Educational

Visits for Bury Schools, Academies and Colleges

- Contact Emergency Planning Officer/ Civil Contingencies Team for support
- OEAP NG document: [4.1i Emergencies and Critical Incidents](#) – An Overview
- OEAP NG documents: other emergency documents in section 4.1 of NG

Monitoring of Visits and Procedures

Headteachers and Service Managers should ensure that visits and visit management procedures are monitored to ensure the requirements of this policy are being carried out. This monitoring should be along similar lines to the evaluation of Teaching and Learning in the classroom. It should be clear in the School visit policy who is responsible for carrying out this monitoring. This may be supplemented by field monitoring by the Educational Visits Adviser on the Employer's behalf.

Types of monitoring include:

- Submission and approval process by EVC and Head/Manager monitors planning and arrangements
- Discussions with visit leader/staff team
- Feedback from staff, pupils, parents
- Asking pupils about the visit
- Field monitoring (this should take place from time to time to help confirm that practice on the ground meets expectations)

Monitoring can cover safety factors such as:

- Risk assessments are in place for the activity and the plan B activity
- Evidence of staff training and competence
- Personal Protective Equipment and other safety critical equipment
- Transport including driver competence
- Suitability of venue and location
- Weather and time of year
- Emergency procedures including base contact and communication
- First aid provision
- Pastoral supervision

However, it is also important to consider the importance of quality of provision and factors that can be monitored include:

- Clear aims and objectives

- Does the task/activity match the aims and objectives?
- Proportion of time on task
- Differentiation
- Progression
- Pace
- Appropriate level of challenge
- Inclusion and special needs provision
- Extension activities
- Assessment for learning
- Relating learning to other contexts
- Evaluation

Educational Visits Checklist

Our Lady of Lourdes 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'. Our Lady of Lourdes Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time.

The school obtains blanket consent at the start of each year for certain other routine activities, eg. after school fixtures and parents/carers return their consent forms which are kept on record.

Specific, (ie. one-off such as residential visits), parental consent must be obtained for all other visits. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents (via letters, meetings, etc), so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis. School must receive a written consent from the parents/carers before being able to attend the visit.

Inclusion

Our Lady of Lourdes is fully committed to ensuring that the application of this Educational Visits policy is non-discriminatory in line with the UK Equality Act (2010). We seek to implement this policy through adherence to the procedures set out in the rest of this document. In those instances where it is needed and we deem it important, we will assist with financial support, in order to allow all of our students access to a wide range of visits and experiences. Pupil Premium funding will be used to assist FSM and Ever 6 students where appropriate, including the purchase of passports to ensure full access to opportunities. Where a visit is directly supporting our curriculum provision, FSM and Ever 6 students will automatically be included and parents will have to opt out; in order to offset reluctance from some parents /carers to request financial help.

Anyone organising a trip should also refer to our SEND and Equal Opportunities policies.

Behaviour

It may be reasonable to exclude a young person on the grounds of behaviour if the behaviour is unmanageable and presents a significant health, safety and/or welfare risk to the young person, the group or the leaders. Where behaviour issues are not associated with a protected characteristic then it is unlikely the Equality Act will apply.

Refer to National Guidance: [3.2e Inclusion](#), [4.4i Special Educational Needs and Disabilities](#) [DfE Equality Act 2010: Advice for Schools](#)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding procedures should be considered as part of the planning process with additional consideration for residential visits.

Visit Leaders should:

- Liaise with DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and Pastoral Leaders to identify any relevant safeguarding issues
- Ensure appropriate vetting and barred list checks are in place (including enhanced DBS and barred list checks for unsupervised adults engaged in regulated activities)
- Consider issues relating to on-line safety, social media, access to and sharing of inappropriate content
- Know how, when and who to report safeguarding concerns to during a visit
- Be familiar with Safer Working Practice principles

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks

School staff will normally require an enhanced DBS check with barred list check as a result of their day-to-day work.

Leaders/helpers (including volunteers) involved in off-site visits will require an enhanced DBS check with barred list check if they meet each of the following criteria:

- they are involved in a *regulated activity*
- they are *unsupervised*
- the activities are carried out *frequently* or *intensively*

(For further details see OEAP NG document: [3.2g Vetting and DBS Checks](#))

Further guidance to consider:

- OEAP NG documents:
 - [4.3e Safeguarding](#)
 - [3.2g Vetting and DBS Checks](#)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Safer Working Practice Guidance

Transport

Our Lady of Lourdes follows LA Guidance

Use of staff cars to transport pupils

Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport pupils then this must be approved by the Headteacher and 'Private Car Form' must be completed and retained by Our Lady of Lourdes. These can be downloaded from EVOLVE – please see the EVC for the relevant forms.

Insurance

School should ensure they have appropriate insurance in place. This should include checks to ensure that cover is provided for visits abroad, adventurous or hazardous activities e.g. Winter sports (including artificial skiing and snow slopes in the UK).

Unusual activities may need to be discussed with the Educational Visits Advisory Service and School needs to ensure that suitable insurance is in place.

The Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) is an alternative to commercial insurance for schools. Under RPA, the UK Government covers the losses instead of commercial insurance.

Bury Council holds Public and Employer's 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, property. Employees 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 School and settings for which the employer is responsible. This insurance does not cover Bury LEA Schools.

Heads and Service Managers should note that insurance cover may be invalidated if they fail to adhere to the requirements of this policy and advice within National Guidance.

Refer to:

- National Guidance document: [4.4c Insurance](#)
- [Risk Protection Arrangement](#)

Liability Waivers

Schools must not undertake any activity where the provider asks for a liability waiver to be signed (either by school staff or by parents) before participation.

Refer to National Guidance document: [3.2i Contracts and Waivers](#)

Other topics

Swimming Lessons

Young people should always be supervised whilst changing. Additional supervisory guidance as follows:

- if young people are using a mixed sex changing area with cubicles then a member of staff of either gender may supervise
- if using open-plan single-sex changing areas then it is highly desirable that staff of the appropriate gender should enter the changing room, this may not always be possible.
- Teachers sometimes have to operate a remote supervision procedure when gender balance is not appropriate. This can only happen where the young people are responsible enough and mature enough to take on significant personal responsibility whilst changing. In order to protect themselves, two members of staff should operate together when controlling by voice through doorways, or entering changing areas in an emergency.
- Ideally young people will change in separate 'school changing areas' as it is not desirable for members of the public to share changing provision with school children. Pool operators should be asked, wherever possible, to make arrangements for separate areas or times to enable this to happen. Where this cannot be achieved appropriate supervision arrangements need to be agreed between the pool and the school.

Dismissal of pupils after evening activities

On return to school, the Trip Leader remains at the school's pickup location (usually the hall) until the last child has been collected. At school there will be a member of the SLT waiting to support the trip leader in dismissing all pupils safely and school procedures on late pickups from school would apply.

Appendix 1 – School 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 follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:

- do not require parental consent (state if there are any situations where you would like parents to be informed in advance, eg. via a slip sent home).
- do not normally need additional risk assessments/notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).
- do not need to be recorded on EVOLVE (amend if you require certain activities to be approved via EVOLVE – you may want to differentiate between planned and ad-hoc activities).

Boundaries

The boundaries of the School Learning Area are: to Old Hall Primary School to Brandlesholme Shops. This area includes, but is not limited to, the following frequently used venues:

- Local LA Schools - e.g. St Gabriel's RC High School, Guardian Angels RC Primary School, St Joseph's RC Primary School, St Marie's RC Primary School
- Guardian Angel's Church
- Castle Leisure Centre
- Burrs Country Park

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area

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

- Road traffic.
- 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, Assistant Headteacher or EVC 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.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the 'School Learning Area' is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school, and a synopsis is in the School Prospectus.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults.

- 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. *This needs a decision and will depend on the area you are in – return to school, wait where they are, go to x and ask for help, etc).*
- All remotely supervised work in the School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- 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 deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return. Use signing out/in sheet.
- A school 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, goggles).
- When crossing Brandlesholme Road staff should use the half-way crossing points.

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; out of school hours it is the Headteacher/Assistant Headteachers'/EVCs mobile phone).
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 School'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 either:
 - a) An LA Emergency 'Card' (see EVOLVE Resources)
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.