

ST. MARGARET CLITHEROW

ROMAN CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Day Trip and Educational Visits Policy

Pupils in St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School are happy, confident and very proud of their school. They clearly understand their mission statement, 'Jesus lives in us, our families, our school, our church, our world. Jesus is our guide, let us follow Him.' They can quote scripture to give examples of how they do their best to follow Jesus every day. Pupils explain that if they ever feel worried about something they are confident that adults will help them in a discreet and caring way. They are fully aware of their responsibilities towards the more vulnerable members of society and can reference Catholic social teaching when discussing their work with the local foodbank.

Catholic Schools Inspectorate October 2024

Pupils enjoy school. They respond well to the high expectations of staff. Pupils strive to do their best and achieve well. Pupils are extremely kind and caring. They frequently give up their free time to help each other. Lessons are free from disruption and lunchtimes are a buzz of happy and harmonious play.

Ofsted May 2024

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Policy statement

The school recognises that educational visits and learning outside the classroom (LOtC) are an important part of a broad, balanced and engaging primary curriculum. They provide pupils with opportunities to develop knowledge, skills, independence, confidence, social understanding and an appreciation of the world around them.

The school is committed to providing safe, inclusive and purposeful educational visits. All visits will be planned and managed in accordance with the school's safeguarding and health and safety procedures, applicable legal requirements, Hertfordshire County Council guidance where applicable, and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance.

The school will adopt a proportionate approach to planning and risk management.

Procedures will reflect the nature of the activity, location, journey, age and needs of pupils, and the competence of the adults involved.

No visit will take place without the appropriate planning, risk management and authorisation.

Aims and objectives

Educational visits should:

- Enhance learning through first-hand experiences and real-life contexts.
- Enrich the curriculum across all subject areas.
- Develop pupils' understanding of their local community and environment.
- Promote curiosity, independence, resilience, cooperation and responsible behaviour.
- Provide opportunities for physical activity, exploration and practical learning.
- Support pupils' personal, social, emotional and cultural development.
- Ensure that all pupils have equitable opportunities to participate.

Every visit must have a clear educational or developmental purpose and identifiable learning outcomes appropriate to the pupils taking part.

Scope

This policy applies to all school-organised off-site visits and activities, including:

- Routine local walks and local curriculum visits.
- Visits to parks, libraries, places of worship, museums, galleries and other educational venues.
- Visits to theatres, farms, outdoor learning centres and places of historical interest.
- Sporting fixtures, swimming and other off-site physical activities.
- Day trips involving public transport, school transport, hired coaches or minibuses.
- Residential visits and visits involving adventurous or higher-risk activities.
- Activities undertaken by pupils as part of the curriculum outside the school premises.

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This policy applies to teaching staff, support staff, volunteers and other adults accompanying pupils.

It should be read alongside the school's safeguarding and child protection policy, behaviour and self-regulation policy, health and safety policy, first aid arrangements, supporting pupils with medical conditions policy, intimate care arrangements where relevant, and emergency procedures.

Roles and responsibilities

Governing body or trust board

- Ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for educational visits.
- Ensure that responsibilities for approving and monitoring visits are clearly delegated.
- Receive assurance that visits are being planned and managed appropriately.
- Review significant incidents and relevant lessons learned where appropriate.

Headteacher

- Ensure that the school has an effective educational visits policy and supporting procedures.
- Ensure that appropriate staff are appointed to lead and coordinate visits.
- Approve visits in accordance with the school's delegated arrangements.
- Ensure that sufficient staff, time and resources are available.
- Ensure that significant risks and additional support needs are addressed.
- Decide whether a proposed visit can proceed, must be amended or should be cancelled.
- Ensure that emergency arrangements are in place.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

- Support staff in planning visits and applying relevant guidance.
- Check that proposed visits have appropriate educational aims, risk management and supervision arrangements.
- Review visit documentation and advise the headteacher on approval.
- Ensure that staff understand the school's procedures and the use of EVOLVE.
- Maintain the school's Local Learning Area arrangements and standard operating procedures.
- Advise on staff competence, training and additional support requirements.
- Ensure that incidents, accidents and near misses are recorded and reviewed.
- Keep relevant visit records and supporting documentation.

The EVC does not remove the visit leader's responsibility for planning and managing their visit, nor the headteacher's responsibility for authorisation.

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Visit leader

- Plan the visit and ensure that its objectives are clear.
- Follow the school's approval process and relevant Hertfordshire guidance.
- Complete the required risk assessments, visit forms and supporting documentation.
- Check the suitability and competence of any external provider where required.
- Identify the staffing, supervision, first aid, medical and accessibility arrangements needed.
- Brief accompanying adults and pupils before departure.
- Ensure that registers, emergency contacts and relevant medical information are available securely.
- Monitor conditions and risks throughout the visit.
- Maintain appropriate communication with the school.
- Report accidents, incidents, near misses and concerns.

The visit leader must not proceed if essential safety arrangements are inadequate or approval has not been obtained.

Accompanying staff and volunteers

- Follow the visit leader's instructions and the school's procedures.
- Understand their responsibilities for supervision and safeguarding.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Follow the agreed risk assessment and pupil support arrangements.
- Report concerns, incidents or changes in circumstances promptly.
- Avoid actions that compromise pupil safety or supervision.

Volunteers must receive an appropriate briefing before the visit. Their suitability, role and level of supervision must be considered before they are assigned responsibilities.

Volunteers must not be given sole responsibility for a group unless this has been explicitly authorised under the school's procedures and the adult's competence and suitability have been assessed.

Categories of visit and approval

Routine, low-risk visits

These may include familiar local walks and curriculum activities that present no more than everyday risks and are covered by the school's established procedures and Local Learning Area standard operating procedures.

Such visits may follow the school's simplified approval process where permitted by the employer's guidance and the school's arrangements. Staff must still follow the agreed route, supervision, safeguarding, emergency and recording procedures.

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Visits requiring additional planning

Visits involving unfamiliar locations, hired transport, more complex travel arrangements, higher-risk activities, particular medical or accessibility needs, or risks not adequately covered by existing procedures require additional planning and risk assessment.

These visits must be submitted for review and approval through the school's designated process, using EVOLVE where required by the school or employer.

Residential, adventurous and other notifiable visits

Residential visits and visits involving adventurous activities or other arrangements requiring specialist planning must follow the relevant employer and OEAP guidance.

Visits that require notification to Hertfordshire County Council must be submitted through EVOLVE in accordance with the applicable requirements and timescales. Hertfordshire's published policy identifies overseas visits and establishment-staff-led adventurous activities among the categories requiring notification.

The headteacher must ensure that any required external notification or approval is completed before the visit takes place.

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Recording and authorisation of Local Learning Area visits

All visits undertaken within the school's designated Local Learning Area must be recorded on EVOLVE in accordance with Hertfordshire County Council guidance and the school's agreed procedures.

Before the visit takes place, the member of staff responsible must ensure that the visit is entered on EVOLVE using the appropriate local visit recording process. The record must include the relevant information about the destination, purpose of the visit, supervising staff and any specific arrangements required.

Where a visit follows an established Local Learning Area standard operating procedure, staff may use the approved arrangements and existing risk assessments, provided these remain suitable for the proposed visit and the pupils involved.

Recording a visit on EVOLVE does not, in itself, constitute approval. Staff must ensure that the visit has received the appropriate authorisation in accordance with the school's procedures before departure.

The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will oversee the recording and monitoring of Local Learning Area visits and ensure that staff understand the process to be followed. Any visit that falls outside the agreed Local Learning Area arrangements, or introduces additional risks, must be referred to the EVC for further consideration and approval as required.

The Local Learning Area

Definition

The school's Local Learning Area is the area around the school in Stevenage within which pupils may undertake identified routine, low-risk educational activities, following the school's approved standard operating procedures.

The Local Learning Area is intended to facilitate regular curriculum learning in the local community without unnecessary administrative burden. It does not remove the need for appropriate supervision, risk management or school authorisation.

Boundaries and approved destinations

The Local Learning Area is the area surrounding the school in Stevenage.

Potential destinations may include nearby parks, public spaces, local community facilities and other venues suitable for primary-age pupils. Each destination must be confirmed as appropriate before the trip is authorized by the Headteacher.

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Conditions for using the Local Learning Area

Visits under the Local Learning Area arrangements must:

- Have a clear educational purpose.
- Use a destination approved by the Headteacher.
- Be covered by the relevant standard operating procedure and risk assessment.
- Have appropriate staffing and supervision for the pupils and activity.
- Take account of weather, traffic, ground conditions and other relevant hazards.
- Meet the individual needs of participating pupils.
- Follow the school's arrangements for recording, authorisation and communication.

A visit does not qualify as routine solely because it takes place nearby. The activity, location and actual risks must also fall within the agreed arrangements.

Visits outside the Local Learning Area

- Visits beyond the local area, or visits involving risks not covered by the existing procedures, must be planned and authorised under the school's arrangements for other off-site visits.
- The EVC must be consulted if staff are uncertain whether a proposed activity falls within the Local Learning Area.

Planning and risk assessment

Planning must begin sufficiently early to allow time for approval, communication with parents and carers, transport arrangements and any necessary adjustments.

The visit leader must consider, as relevant:

- Educational aims and intended outcomes.
- The suitability of the venue and planned activities.
- The route, journey and transport arrangements.
- Traffic, pedestrian safety and road crossings.
- Supervision and group organisation.
- The age, maturity, behaviour and experience of pupils.
- Medical needs, allergies, medication and emergency treatment.
- Special educational needs, disabilities and accessibility.
- Safeguarding and missing-pupil procedures.
- Weather, clothing, food, drinking water and toilets.
- First aid, communications and emergency arrangements.
- The suitability and competence of external providers.
- Financial arrangements and any required consent.
- Contingency arrangements and cancellation criteria.

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Risk assessments must be suitable and proportionate. Existing assessments may be used as a starting point but must be checked against the actual visit, participants and conditions.

Where a pupil needs additional support, the visit leader must work with relevant staff and parents or carers to identify appropriate adjustments and arrangements.

Staffing and supervision

The visit leader must establish a suitable level of supervision based on a risk assessment. There is no single staffing ratio that is appropriate for every primary school visit.

Consideration must be given to:

- Pupils' ages and developmental stages.
- Group size and the nature of the activity.
- The location and complexity of the route.
- The number and type of hazards.
- Pupils' behaviour, medical needs and support requirements.
- Staff experience, competence and familiarity with the group.
- The availability of first aid and emergency support.

Any minimum staffing requirements imposed by the school, employer, venue or activity provider must be followed.

Adults must understand their allocated groups and responsibilities. Staff must maintain suitable headcounts and registers at departure, arrival, transitions and other appropriate points.

Staffing arrangements must allow for foreseeable situations, including a pupil needing individual attention or an adult having to deal with an incident.

Safeguarding and pupil conduct

The school's safeguarding and child protection procedures apply during all visits.

Before departure, the visit leader must ensure that pupils understand:

- Expected behaviour and boundaries.
- Instructions for walking together and crossing roads.
- Where to go and whom to approach if separated from the group.
- How to seek help if they feel unwell, unsafe or worried.
- Any specific rules for the venue or activity.

Staff must remain vigilant and maintain appropriate supervision. Any safeguarding concern must be reported in accordance with the school's safeguarding procedures.

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Pupils must not be permitted to leave the group or agreed area without appropriate authorisation and supervision.

The visit leader must have an agreed procedure for responding to a missing pupil, including immediate searches where appropriate, notification to the school and escalation to the emergency services when necessary.

Medical needs, first aid and inclusion

The school will make reasonable efforts to ensure that all pupils can participate in educational visits.

Before departure, the visit leader must identify relevant medical needs, allergies, medication requirements and individual support arrangements.

The visit leader must ensure that:

- Necessary medication is available and can be accessed promptly.
- Adults understand any relevant emergency procedures.
- Appropriate first aid provision is available.
- Required medical information is handled securely.
- Reasonable adjustments are made to support participation.
- Parents or carers and relevant staff are consulted where appropriate.

The school will not exclude a pupil automatically because of a disability or medical condition. Decisions must be based on the individual circumstances, reasonable adjustments and an assessment of the actual risks.

Where a pupil cannot safely participate in the proposed arrangements, the school must consider whether changes to the visit or additional support can enable participation.

Transport and road safety

Transport arrangements must be appropriate to the visit and comply with relevant legal requirements and school procedures.

Where pupils travel on foot, staff must use the agreed route, suitable crossing points and appropriate group arrangements. Pupils must be briefed on road safety before departure.

Where a coach, minibus, public transport or private vehicle is used, the visit leader must ensure that the arrangements have been approved and that the relevant safety requirements are met.

This includes checking, as appropriate:

- The suitability of the transport provider.
- Vehicle and driver requirements.

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- Seat belts and passenger capacity.
- Boarding and alighting arrangements.
- Passenger supervision and headcounts.
- Accessibility and any specialist equipment.
- Contingency arrangements for delays or breakdowns.

Private vehicles may only be used in accordance with the school's approved procedures, including any required checks, insurance and parental permissions.

Parental communication and consent

Parents and carers must receive appropriate information about educational visits.

For routine curriculum visits, the school will inform parents or carers in accordance with its agreed procedures and the applicable guidance. Written consent is not required for most routine curriculum visits for pupils beyond nursery age, although the school may use annual consent arrangements where appropriate.

Written consent must be obtained where required by law, the employer's guidance or the school's procedures. It will normally be required for visits involving higher levels of risk, activities outside normal school hours or other circumstances identified by the school.

Information provided to parents and carers should explain the purpose of the visit, destination, timings, transport arrangements, clothing or equipment requirements, costs where applicable, and any consent required.

Parents and carers must have a suitable opportunity to share relevant information about their child's medical, dietary, accessibility or other needs.

The school will explain how parents and carers can raise concerns or request further information.

Emergency arrangements

An emergency plan must be in place appropriate to the nature of the visit.

The visit leader must have access to relevant contact details, participant information and the school's emergency procedures.

In an emergency, staff must:

Protect life and prevent further harm where it is safe to do so.

Contact the emergency services where necessary.

Provide appropriate first aid within their competence.

Account for pupils and other participants.

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Contact the school using the agreed communication arrangements.

Follow instructions from the school and emergency services.

Ensure that parents or carers are contacted through the agreed school process.

Staff must not make public statements or share identifying information about an incident unless authorised to do so.

The school will ensure that a designated person is available to coordinate the school's response and support communication with families and relevant authorities.

External providers and venues

Where a visit uses an external provider, the visit leader must consider the provider's suitability, competence and safety arrangements.

The level of checking must reflect the activity and risks involved. Relevant considerations may include the provider's qualifications, staffing, safeguarding arrangements, insurance, equipment, emergency procedures and any applicable accreditation or quality assurance.

The school must not assume that a provider's assurances remove its own responsibility to plan and supervise the visit appropriately.

Costs and financial arrangements

The school will manage visit costs in accordance with its charging and remissions policy and applicable requirements.

Parents and carers will be informed of any requested contributions and the arrangements for payment. Financial considerations must be managed fairly and must not undermine the school's commitment to inclusion.

The visit leader must follow the school's procedures for handling money, booking transport and venues, and keeping records of expenditure.

Weather, cancellation and changes

The visit leader must monitor relevant conditions before and during the visit.

A visit may need to be amended, postponed or cancelled because of adverse weather, transport disruption, venue changes, staffing shortages, medical concerns or other circumstances that affect safety.

The visit leader must consult the headteacher or designated senior leader where required. Significant changes to the approved itinerary, activity, staffing or risk profile must be reviewed and reauthorised as appropriate.

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No visit should continue where the risks can no longer be managed adequately.

Recording, evaluation and incident reporting

The school will retain appropriate records of visit planning, authorisation, risk assessments, consent where applicable, participant information and any required provider checks.

Accidents, incidents, near misses and safeguarding concerns must be reported and recorded under the school's established procedures. Significant incidents must be escalated to the headteacher and relevant authorities as required.

Lessons learned will be used to improve future visits and update standard operating procedures and risk assessments where necessary.

Staff training and information

Staff involved in educational visits must understand the responsibilities associated with their role.

The school will identify training and briefing needs for the headteacher, EVC, visit leaders and accompanying adults. Staff must be competent to undertake their assigned responsibilities.

The school will ensure that relevant staff have access to current Hertfordshire guidance, OEAP National Guidance, EVOLVE and the school's own procedures.

Hertfordshire guidance recommends that establishments have at least two members of staff who have completed Management of Offsite Visits EVC training or update training within the previous three to five years. The school will confirm and follow the requirements applicable to its establishment.

Monitoring and review

The headteacher and EVC will monitor the implementation of this policy and the effectiveness of the school's visit arrangements.

The policy will be reviewed annually, or earlier following a significant incident, a change in guidance, organisational changes or the identification of improvements required.

The governing body or trust board will receive appropriate assurance that the policy is being implemented effectively.

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Related guidance and documents

Hertfordshire County Council: Learning Outside the Classroom and Offsite Visits Guidance — <https://thegrid.org.uk/health-and-safety-offsite-visits-premises/offsite-visits/learning-outside-the-classroom-and-offsite-visits-guidance>

Hertfordshire County Council: EVOLVE system — <https://thegrid.org.uk/health-and-safety-offsite-visits-premises/offsite-visits/evolve-online-notifications-and-approvals-system>

Hertfordshire County Council: Offsite visit forms — <https://thegrid.org.uk/health-and-safety-offsite-visits-premises/offsite-visits/offsite-visit-forms>

Department for Education: Health and safety on educational visits — <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

Health and Safety Executive: School trips — <https://www.hse.gov.uk/education/school-trips.htm>

OEAP National Guidance — <https://oeapng.info>

The school's safeguarding and child protection policy.

The school's health and safety policy.

The school's behaviour and self-regulation policy.

The school's supporting pupils with medical conditions policy.

The school's charging and remissions policy.

The school's emergency response plan.

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Appendix A: Local Learning Area Standard Operating Procedure

Approved area: Stevenage

Before each local visit, the responsible member of staff must:

- Confirm that the destination and route are approved.
- Confirm the purpose of the visit and its suitability for the pupils.
- Check staffing, supervision and pupil support arrangements.
- Review relevant weather, traffic and location-specific risks.
- Ensure appropriate first aid, medication and emergency information is available.
- Brief pupils and accompanying adults.
- Record the individual visit on EVOLVE using the school's designated Local Learning Area process and obtain the required authorisation before departure.

During each local visit, staff must:

- Maintain appropriate supervision and headcounts.
- Use the agreed route and crossing points.
- Keep the group together in accordance with the risk assessment.
- Monitor conditions and respond to changing risks.
- Maintain communication arrangements and follow emergency procedures.

Following the visit, staff must report any incident, near miss or concern and update the EVC where changes to the route, destination or procedure may be necessary.

Appendix B: Pre-visit checklist

- Educational purpose and learning outcomes confirmed.
- Destination and route checked and approved.
- Individual local visit entered on EVOLVE where applicable.
- Required authorisation obtained before departure.
- Risk assessment and standard operating procedure reviewed.
- Staffing and supervision arrangements confirmed.
- Pupil medical, accessibility and support needs addressed.
- First aid kit and necessary medication available.
- Emergency contacts and communication arrangements available.
- Pupils and accompanying adults briefed.
- Parent/carers information and consent completed where required.
- Transport and venue arrangements confirmed, if applicable.
- Weather and contingency arrangements considered.

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