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Health & Safety Team Educational Visits Code of Practice

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Procedure

An overview of the Educational Visits Code of Practice is provided on the next page. This can be printed and used as a quick reference management tool. More detailed procedural information, along with links to further guidance/templates, can be found on subsequent pages.

It is the responsibility of all staff employed in a management capacity to ensure this procedure is implemented within their area of control and communicated in a format that will be understood including toolbox talks and verbal test of understanding where appropriate. Immediate implementation of these procedures is required where they are not already in operation to ensure legal compliance is met. Where a new service or process is to be implemented, or existing methods changed, those in a management capacity will be responsible for ensuring these procedures are in place prior to commencement.

Those employed in a management capacity will recognise the role of both union and non-union H&S representatives in terms of communication and consultation on matters affecting the H&S of employees, including them as appropriate in this process.

Contents

1.0	Executive Summary (Introduction).....	2
2.0	Definitions.....	3
3.0	Process Flowchart.....	4
4.0	Summary of Duties (Key Roles) (Key People).....	5
5.0	Further Information.....	7
6.0	Further Advice and Guidance.....	11
7.0	Appendices.....	12

1.0 Executive Summary

The Department for Education provide advice to schools on the safe management of Educational Visits: www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits.

The Health and Safety Executive also produce a document called: www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf 'Tackling the Health and Safety Myths.

The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (Section 2) places general duties on employers to ensure the health, safety and welfare of their employees whilst at work. This includes those employees who conduct educational visits.

In addition, the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 (section 3) places general duties on employers to ensure that persons not in their employment who may be affected are not exposed to risks to their health or safety. This includes individuals participating in educational visits including pupils, service users and members of the public.

Regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 places duties on employers to make suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks to which employees and non-employees may be exposed in the course of their undertaking. This must include the risks associated with educational visits.

This code of practice provides guidance on how employers can practically comply with both sets of legislation when applied to all educational visits involving children, young people and vulnerable adults. It applies regardless of whether the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

Sunderland City Council has adopted the National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off-site visits and learning outside the classroom, published by the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP), which provides detailed guidance about educational visits and outdoor learning: www.oeapng.info

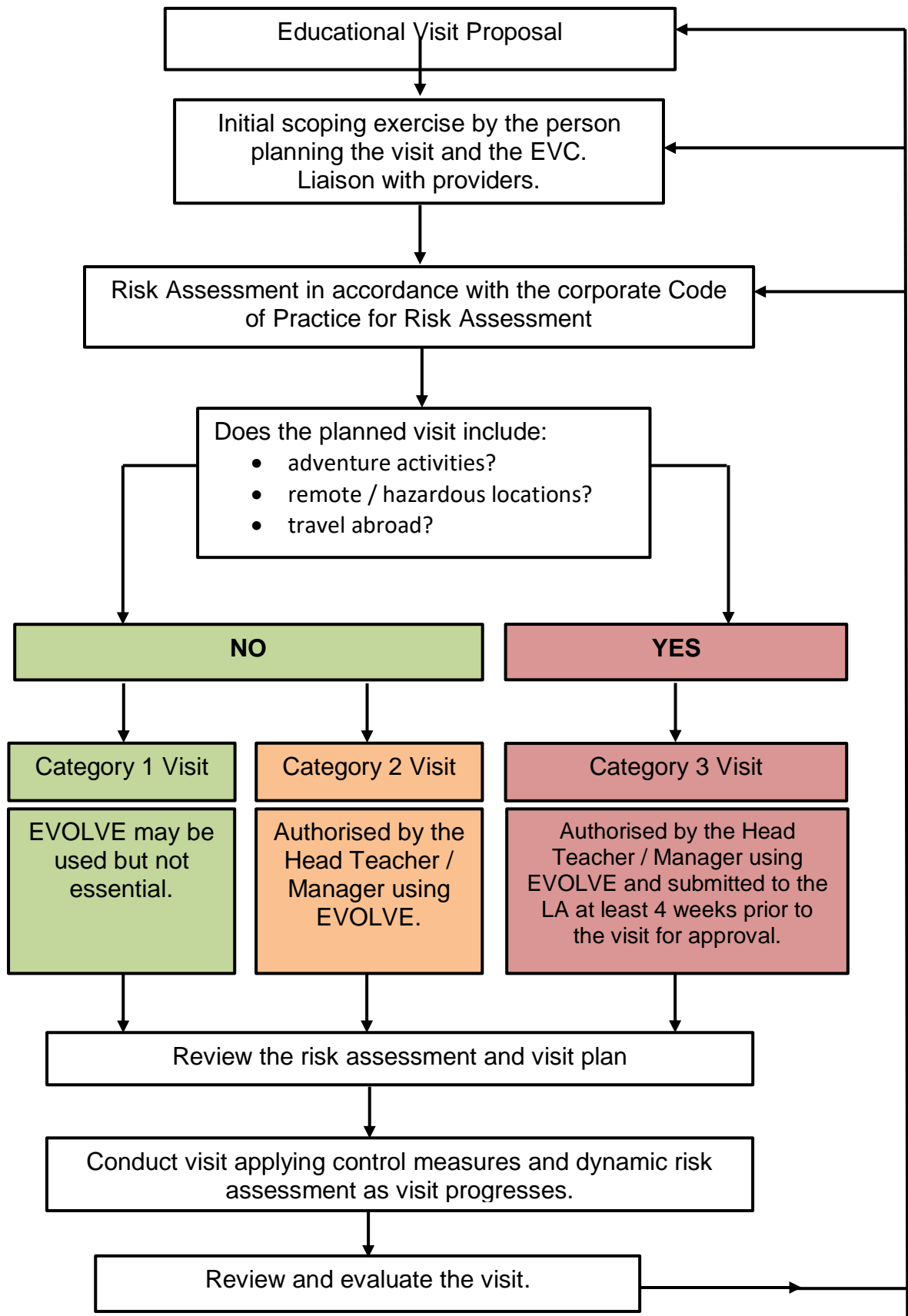
All employees must follow the OEAP guidance along with this Code of Practice and other Council policies. Should there be any conflicting areas, then the Council's policies must

be followed, and clarification should be sought from the Educational Visit Advisory Service.

2.0 Definitions

- **‘Educational visits’** are defined as events that involve children, young people or vulnerable adults being away from their normal school or service premises, whilst still within the care of the school or service. Educational visits comprise the entire period between departing from and returning to the school or service base including time devoted to travel. An educational visit can comprise one or more activities.
- An **‘Educational Visits Coordinator’** is a member of staff who is appointed to coordinate all visits and with the status to effect change and be the focus of good practice.
- The **‘EVOLVE system’** is an online notification and approval system used for the planning, risk management, authorisation and monitoring of educational visits.
- The **‘Educational Visits Advisory Service (EVAS)’** is a service which provides advice and guidance on the management of educational visits. Sunderland City Council’s EVAS is based at Derwent Hill.
- **‘Category 1 visits’** are low risk, straightforward routine visits to local sites or activities. Examples include visits to local parks, woods, swimming pools, high schools and regular sporting fixtures.
- **‘Category 2 visits’** are medium risk visits that may involve transport and residential stays but do not involve anything in Category 3. Examples include visits to theatres, zoos, historical sites, museums, sporting events.
- **‘Category 3 visits’** are visits abroad, visits involving adventure activities and visits to remote or hazardous locations.

3.0 Process Flowchart



4.0 Summary of Duties (Key Roles / People)

4.1 Head Teacher / Manager

All visits must be authorised by the Head Teacher / Manager. They should ensure that the visit complies with this Code of Practice and the OEAP National Guidance: www.oeapng.info and that all staff deployed on a visit are competent to carry out their intended roles.

For more details on the role of the Head Teacher / Manager please refer to the OEAP National Guidance site: www.oeapng.info

4.2 Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

All schools and Council services which provide educational visits must appoint and train nominated personnel in the capacity of an EVC. EVCs must undertake an EVC training course and receive refresher training every three years. Training is provided by the Educational Visits Advisory Service.

The EVC should be specifically competent. The level of competence required can be judged in relation to the size of the establishment as well as the extent and nature of the visits planned. Evidence of competence may be through qualification, as well as experience of practical leadership over many years. Such a person should be an experienced Visit Leader with sufficient status within the establishment to guide the working practice of colleagues leading visits. This cannot be a purely administrative role, although certain functions may be delegated to an administrator.

Where the EVC role is attached to an administrative post or where the post holder is not an experienced visit leader, the EVC will require structured support from a designated colleague who fits the recommended criteria and who will fulfil those aspects not covered by the post holder.

It is considered best practice to appoint and train a deputy EVC to ensure there is access to this role in the event of the primary EVC being absent.

For more details on the role of the EVC please refer to the OEAP National Guidance site: www.oeapng.info

The role of the EVC should:

- Support the Head Teacher / Service Manager with the approval of visits.
- Establish a robust management system to manage educational visits encompassing a local policy; visit proposal; pre-visits to host sites where practicable; sharing of the host site / companies risks; policies; risk management procedures and guidance; parental consent forms; transport assessments; and arrangements to deal with serious and imminent danger.

- Develop an establishment / school policy that sets out how this guidance is implemented in practice, making reference to the OEAP National Guidance.
- Support the Head Teacher / Service Manager to ensure that Visit Leaders, Assistant Leaders and Activity Leaders are suitably trained and assess the competency of those individuals to carry out their responsibilities.
- Ensure a formal documented risk assessment has been undertaken, identifying all of the significant hazards associated with the visit and evaluating the risks to which employees and those individuals participating in the visit may be exposed. Suitable control measures must be identified to minimise the risks. Please refer to the Sunderland City Council Risk Assessment Code of Practice.
- Ensure relevant employees helpers / volunteers are aware of and understand risk control measures and emergency arrangements to deal with emergency situations and critical incidents arising during the course of the visit.
- Ensure all educational visits are reviewed after the event, with particular regard to any accidents, incidents, near misses or other significant occurrences during the visit, followed by any necessary review of procedures and / or risk assessments.

4.3 Visit Leadership Team

- Comprises all of the individuals participating in a visit who share responsibility for supervision, including the Visit Leader and any Assistant Leaders, Activity Leaders and Helpers / Volunteers. Risk assessment of each visit will determine the complexity, the level of leadership and the roles required.

4.4 Visit Leader

- The Visit Leader has overall responsibility for a visit. This includes the learning, development and supervision of the participants and the safety of all, including any other leaders and helpers.

The key requirements for leaders are that they must be competent to lead, confident and accountable, not that they hold a particular post, title or job description. There should always be a single designated leader for any visit or activity and, if this role changes, there should be a clear handover.

The Visit Leader is responsible for completing the risk assessments for the visit.

4.5 Assistant Leader

- Individual who supports the Visit Leader and who may be required to take over from the Visit Leader or an Activity Leader if necessary.

4.6 Group Leader

- A member of the Visit Leadership Team who is responsible for the supervision and management of a group during the visit.

4.7 Helpers and Volunteers

- Individuals who have an agreed role during a visit, but who are not a Visit Leader, Assistant Leader, Activity Leader or Participant. For example, a Helper might be: an inexperienced member of staff; a parent; an apprentice, student or trainee; a carer.

The OEAP National Guidance provides further information in respect of roles and responsibilities for educational visits.

4.8 Educational Visits Advisory Service

The Council's Educational Visits Advisory Service (EVAS) is based at Derwent Hill Outdoor Education & Training Centre. The purpose of the EVAS is to:

- Provide advice and guidance to EVCs about planning visits.
- Provide information on the Evolve website.
- Monitors and approves visits using the Evolve online system
- Provide training for EVCs, Visit Leaders and Group Leaders.

5.0 Further Information

5.1 Assessing Venues and Providers

The OEAP National Guidance includes guidance on preliminary visits and provider assurances.

The Council for Learning outside the Classroom Quality Badge provides sufficient reassurance that a provider meets nationally required minimum standards of safety and quality. Details of a provider's status can be checked on the Quality Badge website www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk.

If a provider does not hold the Quality Badge they should be asked to complete a Provider Statement Form. This will enable Head Teachers / Service Managers to evidence that assurances have been sought on the following:

- their insurance
- that they meet legal requirements
- their health and safety and emergency policies
- their risk assessments
- control measures
- their use of vehicles
- staff competence
- safeguarding
- accommodation

- any sub-contracting arrangements they have
- that they have a licence where needed

The School / Services should have an agreement with them that makes it clear what everyone is responsible for. This is especially important if they'll be taking over supervision of the children.

Schools / Services should not sign any documentation at the provider's or venue's request where that third party may seek to indemnify themselves. The provider or venue's documentation should be used only to understand the hazards and risks posed by the venue or activity; to seek assurances that suitable systems are in place; and ensure preparedness for the visit. It is not a requirement to approve provider or venue documentation.

An External Provider is defined as where there is an element of instruction, staffing or guiding. For example: Outdoor Activity Centre, Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by climbing wall staff, Voluntary organisation (e.g. Scout Association) where instruction is provided, Swimming pool providing swimming lessons.

For the purposes of visit approval, an External Provider is NOT a: Public swimming pool, Hotel / B&B etc., Campsite, Museum, Tourist attraction, Theme Park, Farm, Coach / train / airline company, Activity led by establishment staff.

5.2 Establishment Visit Policy

Schools and Council Services should have a policy that sets out how this Sunderland Code of Practice is implemented locally and should make reference to OEAP National Guidance. There is a document on the OEAP National Guidance website (5.3b How to write an establishment visits policy).

5.3 Effective Supervision

Sunderland City Council does not prescribe minimum staff to participant ratios for visits (except where the law requires minimum ratios for Early Years). Ratios and other arrangements for the effective direct, indirect and remote supervision of children, young people and vulnerable adults should be determined through risk assessment considering the following:

- age of the group (including development age / maturity)
- gender
- physical abilities of individuals
- ability of the group, skill levels involved
- nature and location of the activity including the type of activity
- duration of the activity
- risks posed by the activity
- competence of the staff / leader
- environment (urban / rural, language and cultural difference, access to telephone, Wi-Fi, 3G/4G coverage etc.)

- seasonal factors, time of year, light levels, temperatures, weather conditions
- distance from base, how easy would it be to get a participant or member of staff home early, to hospital or to get assistance to the group.

5.4 Notification and Approval of Visits

The Evolve online system is used for notification, approval and monitoring of visits. EVCs, Head Teachers and Service Managers are able to use Evolve system to plan, authorise and monitor visits within their establishments. The system also enables visits requiring Local Authority approval to be brought to the attention of the EVAS automatically. Visit information can be accessed through Evolve in the event of an emergency.

Those schools following this Code of Practice and accessing advice and support from EVAS must use the Evolve system for Category 2 and 3 visits.

For the purposes of notification and approval, educational visits are classified into three categories.

Category	Definition	Requirement for notification & approval
Category 1	Straightforward routine visits defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Category 1 in a written policy by the school or service concerned, • covered by generic risk assessment and subject to regular review. • blanket informed parent/carer consent following school /service operating procedures. 	Evolve may be used but is not essential.
Category 2	Medium risk visits defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • requiring enhanced planning with visit specific risk assessment. • Includes all residential visits not in Category 3 • Includes non-residential visits not in Categories 1 or 3 	Must be authorised by the Head Teacher / Manager, using Evolve.
Category 3	Higher risk visits, defined as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving travel outside of the UK • Visits which include adventure activities • Visits to remote or hazardous locations 	Must be authorised by the Head Teacher / Manager using Evolve and submitted to Local Authority at least four weeks before the visit for approval.

The requirement for Category 3 visits to be authorised by the Head Teacher / Service Manager at least four weeks prior to the visit, ensures adequate time for any issues to be dealt with and to allow Council approval to be given. For more complex visits, more time should be allowed.

5.5 Adventure Activities

School/Service employees who wish to lead adventure activities must have approval to do so from the EVAS on behalf of the Council, unless the authority to approve visits involving adventure activities has been delegated to the Head Teacher / Service Manager. Approval will be based upon evidence of competence, which may include evidence of relevant qualifications, training and experience.

Leader approval for adventure activities is managed through Evolve. Further information should be sought through the Evolve system or by contacting the Educational Visits Advisory Service. A list of adventure activities is provided in Appendix 7.1 of this document.

Further advice should be sought from the Educational Visits Advisory Service where a school/service routinely organises and conducts adventure activities and finds the requirement for EVAS approval on each occasion to be restrictive.

5.6 Insurance

Schools and Council services must ensure adequate insurance cover for educational visits. Please refer to the OEAP National Guidance and the Council's Insurance section for further information.

5.7 Accident / Incident Reporting and Emergency Preparedness

Serious incidents on off-site visits are rare but they do happen. Minor incidents whether they be accidents or other emergencies, are more common. Effective planning and risk assessment means that the likelihood of any of these events is reduced, and where they do occur, the impact and consequences can be minimised.

Significant accidents, incidents and near misses involving employees and participants involved in educational visits must be reported using the online incident reporting system <https://www.sunderland.gov.uk/article/14078/Incident-reporting-IR1>

Head Teacher and Service Managers are responsible for ensuring timely reporting and investigation of accidents and incidents. Please refer to the Council's Incident Reporting Code of Practice for further information.

Sunderland City Council's Emergency Control Room telephone numbers are:
0191 5531998
0191 5531999

5.8 Monitoring

Head Teachers / Managers are responsible for ensuring the monitoring of visits organised by their school / service. The EVC is often best placed to carry out routine monitoring. The OEAP National Guidance includes a document on monitoring. In case of doubt or concern, advice may be obtained from the Educational Visits Advisory Service.

6.0 Further Advice and Guidance

Further information and guidance is available from:

- Educational Visits Advisory Service, Derwent Hill. Tel,017687 72005
www.derwenthill.co.uk
EVAS@sunderland.gov.uk
- Evolve system at www.sunderlandvisits.org.uk
- Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP)
<http://www.oeapng.info>
- Department for Education
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>
- Council for Learning Outside the Classroom
www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk
- Foreign and Commonwealth Office
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/foreign-commonwealth-office>
- Adventure Activities Licencing Authority
<http://www.hse.gov.uk/aala/>
- Home Office
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/home-office>
- Sunderland City Council, Health & Safety
0191 561 2311
- Sunderland City Council, Insurance
0191 5615086, this is an answerphone and is checked daily for messages.

7.0 Appendices

7.1 Adventure activities

Adventure activities are defined as including:

- Abseiling
- Air activities (excluding commercial flights)
- Camping (except 'official' campsites)
- Caving, potholing, mine exploration
- Climbing (including indoor climbing walls)
- Coasteering, coastal scrambling, sea-level traversing
- Fishing in hazardous environments (e.g. sea, fast rivers, or deep water)
- High level ropes activities
- Horse riding & equestrian sports
- Motor sport – all forms
- Mountain Biking
- River/gorge/ghyll walking or scrambling, canyoning
- Shooting, Archery, Paintballing
- Skiing (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Snorkel and aqualung activities
- Snowboarding (including Indoor or Dry Slope)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding UK public pools with lifeguards)
- Walking (hills, mountains, open country)
- Watersports - powered craft, waterskiing (excluding commercial transport)
- Watersports - Canoeing/Kayaking
- Watersports - Rafting or improvised rafting
- Watersports - Rowing
- Watersports - Sailing / windsurfing / kite surfing
- Watersports – Surfing

Remote or hazardous locations may include:

- areas over 600m
- areas more than a 30 minute walk from a road or refuge
- significant water hazards (e.g. fast rivers and/or deep water)
- coastal areas with significant surf and/or tidal hazards
- hazardous quarries
- steep terrain

These lists are not exhaustive: if in doubt advice should be obtained from the Educational Visits Advisory Service.