



Offsite Visits Policy For

ASHGATE CROFT SCHOOL

1. Introduction

Ashgate Croft School acknowledges the immense value and many benefits of outdoor learning and is committed to supporting off-site visits and activities that enrich the learning opportunities of children and young people.

Ashgate Croft School (and any contracted external providers where an activity has been commissioned) works within the requirements set out in Derbyshire County Council's Offsite Visits and Adventure Activities Guidance and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance' (both accessible via EVOLVE).

All establishment staff will be made aware of the requirements of this policy and any changes that are made when the policy is reviewed.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring off-site activities and visits comply with the LA Guidance and this Visit Policy and are notified or submitted for formal approval as required, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the planned provision and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the Establishment wishes to be associated.

The Headteacher will ensure that the Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC), Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

The nominated deputy to approve offsite visits in the absence of the Head is Jenny Dodds

Visit Co-ordinator

The Educational Visit Co-ordinator (EVC) is a staff member who has received relevant training and induction and is delegated with the following tasks: -

- To grant verbal permission that a leader may plan a visit after deciding that the timetabling and ethos of the visit are acceptable.

- To check and approve that the planning and risk management for visits follows employer policy and guidance, and to liaise with the LA as required.
- To ensure that there is sample monitoring of visits in keeping with the recommendations of employer policy and guidance

The EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment

The designated EVC for Ashgate Croft is currently Jenny Dodds

Visit Leader

Visit Leaders will have over-all charge of the visits they lead, which will be effectively supervised with an appropriate level of staffing. They are responsible for ensuring relevant visit information is shared with parents/carers and consent is sought where necessary.

Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers will be appropriately trained as required and specifically competent to carry out the responsibilities allocated to them for all visits.

Details related to a visit and its participants (including staff) will be accessible to a designated 24/7 emergency contact in case of emergencies.

Refer to the [Visit Leader Checklist](#).

Governing Body

Under Health & Safety law the employer has primary responsibility for Health, Safety & Welfare of employees and students.

In establishments where the LA is not the employer the Governors will normally hold this responsibility and should be fully aware of the responsibility this entails.

Along with the Headteacher, the Governing Body is responsible for ensuring visits are approved as required by the establishment visit policy, that all visits approved can be accommodated within the timetable and that the ethos of each visit is one with which the school wishes to be associated.

The Governor responsible for monitoring this policy is Georgia Fisher.

3. Procedures

Staff wishing to plan and undertake a visit (prospective Visit Leaders) will first seek permission from the Headteacher or EVC to plan a visit. The [Visit Planning Flowchart](#) can be referenced as required.

Staff should follow the LA and establishment guidance if undertaking 'home

visits'. This does not form part of this policy.

Finance

The Headteacher, VC and Visit Leaders should take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449-462 of the Education Act 1996 and detailed in the [Charges for Off-Site Activity](#) guidance document.

The establishment charging policy for off-site visits is: "Under the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act, we can only meet the cost of this visit by voluntary contribution. There is no obligation to contribute, and the children will not be treated differently according to the contribution made. However, the visit can only take place if the level of support is sufficient".

Staff Induction and Training

All new staff will as part of their induction into the establishment, be familiar with the local policy for off-site visits and activities and understand their role in managing, planning, leading or assisting with organising off-site visits. All staff will have access to County and national guidance.

The EVC will identify any specific training needs and requirements and ensure staff can access relevant learning and development opportunities as appropriate and as required by Derbyshire County Council.

Visit Approval

Ashgate Croft School has adopted the Derbyshire County Council system for approval of visits which is based on these being categorised into three broad types:

1. Local low risk single day visits that are regular and routine
2. Day visits and programmes that require enhanced planning
3. Higher risk visits, further field that require detailed planning and leader competence

The [Visit process flowchart](#) provides further detail.

Category 1:

These visits will be regular, routine day activities that are organised in and around the locality, usually on foot.

Regularly repeated visits can be covered by a block annual consent subject to parents/carers being made aware of every visit, especially any involving a return time outside the normal day.

Visits and activities included in this category for this establishment are:

Off-site activity (excluding adventurous activities listed in category 3)

Transporting young people between multi-site establishments or other local schools/venues

Regular curriculum delivery at off-site learning provider venues (14-19)

Visits in and around your base setting on foot (churches, parks, urban

centres)
Sports fixtures (involving transport)
DCC Primary curriculum swimming programme

These visits should be planned using the establishment specific local visits risk assessment and with approval by the EVC and Head. Activities can be covered by an [annual blanket parental consent](#).

Where there are local activities that are a planned part of the curriculum/routine programme but are dependent upon the right conditions on the day, then the visit leader will sign out before departure leaving relevant information with the base contact.

The specific establishment off-site visits risk assessment (that may also include road transport) covers general supervision of these visits. A review will be required rather than completing a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the [Event Specific Note form](#).

All other visits: All other visit must be planned and submitted using EVOLVE.

Based on the visit types, EVOLVE automatically directs the flow of approval for Category 2 and 3 visits.

Category 2:

These visits are single “one off” day visits or a programme of visits that take place off-site but further field than your base locality and with no element of adventurous activities (as defined in Category 3). These opportunities will usually require transport and could also require some enhanced planning and risk assessment. Example visits are:

Visits requiring use of transport (urban areas, theatres, social events, places of interest)
Swimming (excluding open water)
Fieldwork visits (not in open/remote country)
Activities at Water Margins (coastal locations & inland waters)
Farm visits
Forest school programmes

These activities will be entered onto EVOLVE and submitted to the EVC 2 working weeks prior to departure. Approval is delegated to Claire Jones and visits should be covered by a [specific parental consent](#).

For a programme of regular visits to similar destinations, one single visit form can be completed, with the relevant dates selected and can be covered by an [annual blanket parental consent](#).

The specific establishment local visits risk assessment (that also includes road transport) will cover general supervision of the visit. A review will be required rather than completed a new document each time. Any additions can be documented using the [Event Specific Note form](#).

If a visit is planned to a higher risk environment, the appropriate Safe Working Procedure document should be reviewed, amended and completed for your specific visit. This will then be attached to the EVOLVE record, prior to submitting to your VC and Head for approval.

Certain activities will require staff to hold specific qualifications or competencies before being able to deliver sessions. e.g. forest school. Please refer to the [activity qualifications matrix](#) for further information. Relevant qualifications will be added and uploaded to EVOLVE. These activities will not be undertaken unless there is a sufficient number of suitably qualified staff to deliver them.

Category 3:

Approval from the Local Authority (LA) will be required for all overseas visits, residential visits and those which include adventurous activities, be it provider or establishment lead. The EVOLVE system will automatically pass such identified visits to the LA for approval after first being checked by Judith Hyde and authorised by Claire Jones. Specific consent will be required for each visit.

Overseas visits and DofE expeditions will be submitted to the LA **four working weeks** before a visit is set to take place, and before anyone is financially committed. **Other visits requiring LA approval require two working weeks notice.** Approval notification via email will automatically be sent out (from EVOLVE) as soon as possible up to two working weeks after receipt of the visit form.

A member of staff intending to lead an adventurous activity, must be specifically approved by the LA to do so via the EVOLVE Leader Approval Request function.

When external providers are used it is a requirement for their safety management to have been verified either by completion and return of a Provider Form or verified by holding an appropriate national accreditation. Providers will not be used until they have been 'vetted' by the LA.

4. Risk Management

The risk management of an activity is normally carried out by visit leader and assistants with the support of EVCs as required. Risks are expected to be reduced to an acceptable or tolerable level, but not necessarily eliminated. Planning should achieve a rational balance between potential adverse risks and the intended benefits and outcomes of the activity.

Ashgate Croft recommends a 'risk-benefit assessment' approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes.

This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is 'acceptable'. HSE endorse this approach through their 'Principles of Sensible Risk Management' and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual or harm several people.

Ashgate Croft staff will adopt and adapt the risk management materials available through EVOLVE to ease the burden of bureaucracy that might otherwise discourage leaders from making full use of educational visit learning opportunities.

A copy of the establishment generic visits risk assessment is located in the EVOLVE resources library in the Admin Office and blank copy of the Event Specific Notes form can be downloaded from the Evolve website.

5. Monitoring

The arrangements for monitoring off-site visits within Ashgate Croft are agreed as monitoring the first visit a member of staff leads and this will be undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher.

6. Insurance

Appropriate insurance must be in place for all visits.

The responsibility for arranging adequate insurance cover rests with Claire Jones in conjunction with the organiser of each journey.

For visits abroad, additional journey insurance **must** be taken out.

As an employer, in addition to the standard public liability cover which all establishments will have in place, Derbyshire County Council offers LA Schools the opportunity to buy into an annual 'blanket' personal accident cover / travel insurance, provided through CHUBB, covering any off-site activities and overseas travel ventures.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body, Headteacher and VC to determine whether any additional insurance should be taken out.

Academies and other non-school based establishments must make their own insurance arrangements.

Insurance in Ashgate Croft is provided by AIG (Liability Insurance) and Gallagher and Heath (Employers Insurance).

7. Inclusion

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to treat a young person less favourably and/or fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that disabled persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Ashgate Croft endorses the principles of:

- a presumption of entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

Adjustments made to include a disabled child or young person should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity.

Expectations of staff must be reasonable, so that what is required of them (to include a given young person) is within their competence.

Behaviour

Ashgate Croft encourage the use of codes of behaviour conduct as a means of establishing appropriate expectations of young person's behaviour. Such codes will be explained to both young people and those with parental authority prior to a visit, so reducing the opportunity for misunderstanding both expectations and the sanctions that may be invoked where a code is breached. For the majority of pupils at Ashgate Croft School their Individual Behaviour Plans will support behaviour on educational visits.

A [model code of conduct](#) can be adapted by visit leaders.

Whilst inclusion of young people and adults on offsite visits will be the norm at Ashgate Croft, this will not be the case where health and safety of the individual or other group members would be significantly compromised. Visit Leaders will ensure that they consult the LA and parents well in advance of the visit where inclusion is an issue.

8. Evaluation

To ensure rigorous evaluation of each visit can take place, visit leaders must have reached a clear understanding of the learning outcomes they hope to achieve. Given that most outdoor learning, off site visits and activities have the potential to deliver a very wide range of benefits and outcomes, the visit leader and staff team to agree how the Learning Outcomes are to be **prioritised**, in the early stages of the planning process and documented on the EVOLVE record.

Each identified outcome can be evaluated and record using EVOLVE.

9. Emergency Procedures

The risk management for each visit will identify the relevant emergency procedures during the visit.

The designated Emergency Home/Base Contact on EVOLVE can be the name of the person taking the call from the visit leader, but they must know who is managing the critical incident (A member of the Leadership Team).

For any off-site visit a home contact will be designated by the establishment who may be needed as a link between the party, the parents/carers, the establishment and the County Council in the event of an emergency. The home contact must be an employee, be unrelated to anyone attending the visit and be confident in providing support in a crisis.

For visits that take place outside normal establishment hours:

- A completed [Emergency Card – Visit Leader](#) (or equivalent) must be with the Visit Leader at all times, **and**
- A completed [Emergency Action Card – Home Contacts](#) (or equivalent) must be with the emergency home contact(s) at all times, where access to EVOLVE is not possible.
- A [First Contact Emergency Action Card](#) can be used when taking an initial call from a Visit Leader in an emergency.

In the event of a delay in retuning (of more than 1 hour), or of an incident resulting in harm to any attending participant, staff member or volunteer, then the establishment must be contacted as soon as possible to inform Claire Jones or designated deputy so that they can decide: -

- A. If the incident is of a less serious nature then the next of kin or parents of those affected will be informed about what has happened (e.g. that the party will be returning late or that an incident has befallen a party member) and the action that has been taken so far. In appropriate circumstances the Visit Leader will be designated to undertake this task.
- B. If the incident is very serious to contact Derbyshire County Council using the emergency contact phone number and details given below:

The emergency contact phone number for Derbyshire County Council during office hours is 00-44-1629-538364 or outside office hours 00-44-1629-533085. This is the number for Call Derbyshire. Upon connection, please ask for the Emergency Planning Duty Officer. Please note that calls to the numbers above are to be used only in extreme circumstances, such as serious injuries and/or fatalities. Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.

10. Accident Reporting

All accidents will be handled in line with Derbyshire's County Council's [Accident Reporting Procedures](#). Accident Forms and other related documents are available in the Resource section of EVOLVE – Guidance.



Academies must ensure they have equivalent procedures to meet the requirements of the law and good practice.
Where an incident or accident occurs on an activity led by a Provider, please ensure this is reported to the LA Visits Team.

Chair of Governors

Signature:

Name:

Date:

Headteacher

Signature:

Name:

Date:

