

Educational Visits

Policy

This SOP was last reviewed in September 2026. It will be reviewed every two years.

It is the aim of The Beacon School to place a high value on diversity, treating every member of the school community as an individual and meeting the needs of all, taking account of: gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, language, sexual orientation, age, ability, disability and social circumstances. In doing this, we aim, therefore, to raise the achievement of all the pupils in the school.

Educational Visits and Outdoor and Adventurous Activities are an integral part of the pupils' education at The Beacon. They offer opportunities to enrich the curriculum and increase pupil engagement, enabling them to have first-hand experience of a wide range of topics and activities. On residential visits especially, there is opportunity to develop social skills which have a long-lasting beneficial effect.

1. Rationale

The Beacon has a strong belief in the value of learning beyond the school day and out of the school premises. We demonstrate this by taking part in carefully planned educational visits, with the approval of our Governors.

We provide a broad and balanced curriculum that promotes spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares young people for the opportunities and experiences of adult life.

2. Purpose

Educational Visits can provide incentive and support to topics being covered as part of the school curriculum. It may be that a visit provides an effective introduction to a unit of work or topic; alternatively teaching staff may decide to use an educational visit at any time during a project to enhance and support learning.

Teaching staff must ensure that the educational benefits to the pupils are identified and recorded as part of the trip application.

3. Guidance

The school has formally adopted, through its Governing Board, the Kent Framework for Safe Practice on Educational Visits and Outdoor Learning Activities. This Educational Visits Policy supports the Local Authority guidance and sets out how our educational visits will be developed, planned and managed.

4. Approval Procedure and Consent

The Executive Headteacher has appointed Head of School as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and the Governing Board has approved this appointment. This person has attended the LA EVC training course and will be given sufficient time and resources to carry out the role (see responsibilities below).

All prospective trips should be discussed with the zone leader prior to development. It will be necessary for the Activity Leader to prepare an application for approval providing an outline including estimated cost and arrangements. Further work (on the visit) should not take place until approval is given.

Low risk and routine visits will be approved by the Head of School. These visits must be submitted, at least 4 weeks before the visit takes place. All higher risk activities (adventurous, residential, and overseas) will be submitted to the LA 8 weeks prior to the trip for approval.

There will be a named Activity Leader (and where appropriate, deputy) on all visits.

Written parental consent will be sought for all educational visits. This will confirm that parents have understood the purpose, estimated cost and arrangements for the visit. In this school it will be the responsibility of the admin team to draft and issue the letter.

5. Responsibilities

5.1 Governors

The Governing Board will satisfy themselves that appropriate safety measures are in place and that staff have been trained to undertake their role.

5.2 Head of School

Responsibility within the school for the approval of visits is with the Head of School; however, overall responsibility remains with the Executive Headteacher.

5.3 Educational Visits Co-Ordinator (Administration)

To help the school fulfil its health and safety responsibilities for visits, to ensure all trips/activities are processed on EVOLVE and supporting documentation is produced and held on file. To liaise with the activity leader and other key staff to ensure the documentation is relevant and provides all the necessary information required for EVOLVE to be signed off by the Head of School. They are also responsible for ensuring all documents are held on file for the period required and ensuring the activity/visit packs are ready for use and contain the necessary information.

5.4 Activity Leader

The Activity Leader must be an employee of the school, have approval from the Head of School and not be a volunteer. They will have overall responsibility and accountability for the supervision and conduct of the visit.

5.5 Pupil Support

The Pupil Support Manager will review on request risk assessments that have students' medical needs that may prevent or not be reasonably practical to administer or control during the activity/visit.

5.6 Health Safety Advisor

The H&S advisor will be responsible for reviewing any risk assessments or activities the Head of School requires. The Activity Leader remains at all times responsible for Health and Safety matter whilst supervising the activity/visit.

5.7 Pupils

The Activity Leader should make it clear to pupils that they must:

- Not take unnecessary risks.
- Follow the instructions of the leader and other staff.
- Dress accordingly for the aim of the trip and follow all expectations of the school.
- Be aware of dangers and inform the activity leader or supporting staff if they notice anything. Pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the trip or visit.
- The curricular aims of the visit for these pupils will be fulfilled in other ways.

6. Planning off-site visits

The Activity Leader is responsible for planning the off-site visit that they are leading. The Head of School and EVC (Admin) must be satisfied that the person planning the visit is competent to do so and has the necessary experience.

Activities that occur weekly and form a part of the class weekly scheme of work will require an application that includes all potential students and staff. The same venue must be used at all times. Only venues that were listed on the initial application can be visited without submitting an individual application, typical trips would be:

- Community visits to shopping outlets such as Morrisons or Tesco's. Other venues may include areas such as Ashford and Canterbury.
- The Woods of Doormond
- Leisure Centres
- Farm Visits
- Performing Arts Ashford
- Regular visits between all school sites.

A risk assessment will be required to cover all locations. Specific details to individual locations must be highlighted.

The Activity Leader must agree all plans with the EVC/Head of School within the required timescale (see Appendix 1).

7. Preliminary Visits

Wherever possible, and with agreement from the Head of School, Activity Leaders will undertake a preliminary visit to:

- ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit;

- assess potential areas and levels of risk;
- ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group;
- ensure that they are familiar with the area before taking a party of young people.

If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, the Activity Leader will contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. In addition, the Activity Leader will seek views from other schools who have recently visited the venue and where appropriate liaise with other bodies.

8. Risk Assessment

It is the responsibility of the Activity Leader to carry out risk assessments covering all aspects of the proposed trip which must be approved by the Head of School or the LA (for more adventurous trips).

On-going assessments to be completed by the Activity Leader throughout the trip to ensure that hazards are monitored and appropriate safety measures are put in place and recorded.

The Activity Leader is responsible for obtaining a Risk Assessment form from the venue or activity provider.

Individual student medical or behaviour details are to be recorded in the relevant section.

It is the responsibility of the Activity Leader to ensure that all accompanying staff are familiar with the risk assessment and to continue to brief staff throughout the trip (see Appendix 1).

9. First Aid

For all activities and visits, it is the policy of this school to ensure adequate first aid is available and the first aider is appropriately trained. For visits abroad, it is the policy of this school to have a minimum of two qualified first aiders in the group. All adults employed by school in the group will know how to contact emergency services, including provision of mobile phones.

During a local visit/trip the Activity Leader will take with them:

- a suitably stocked first-aid travel bag;
- a person appointed to be in charge of first-aid arrangements.

10. Staffing

During any trip/visit there is a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils. To do this we will consider various factors including the age of the group, the nature of the activities, the duration, the type of journey and the medical needs of any pupils within the group. Where adult volunteers are used, the School will ensure that (where appropriate) DBS screening is undertaken.

11. Staff:Pupil ratio

Ratio of staff to pupil needs to be determined by the group size, ability of the pupils and the risk assessment around medical needs, behaviours and activity expectations. Assistant Headteachers will make the decision if they feel this is a suitable ratio for the activity.

Accompanying staff and adult helpers will have the appropriate skills to support the Activity Leader and understand the needs of the group. They will be briefed by the Activity Leader before the visit/trip.

12. Communication

To ensure that all those involved in the visit understand their roles and responsibilities, the Activity Leader will hold a briefing. They will ensure that staff are aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times (see Appendix 1).

13. Information to Pupils

The activity leader must decide what information should be provided to pupils and how to present the information. They must be satisfied that the pupils or key staff supporting understand safety information. Pupils should be made aware of:

- the aims and objectives of the visit /activity;
- background information about the place to be visited;
- how to avoid specific dangers and why they should follow rules;
- why safety precautions are in place;

- why special safety precautions are in place for anyone with disabilities;
- what standard of behaviour is expected from pupils;
- who is responsible for the group;
- what to do if approached by a stranger;
- what to do if separated from the group;
- emergency procedures;
- rendezvous procedures.

14. Participation

Pupils whose behaviour is such that the activity leader is concerned for their, or others' safety, will be withdrawn from the activity. On residential visits the Activity Leader will consider whether such pupils will return home early. This information will be communicated to parents and designated Senior Leader (for longer trips/visits).

15. Communicating with Parents/Guardians

The Activity Leader will ensure that parents are given information about the purpose and details of the visit and are invited to any briefing sessions (for overseas or more adventurous visits).

The Activity Leader will explain to parents how they can help prepare their child for the visit by, for example, reinforcing the visit's code of conduct.

We will ask parents to provide:

- the activity leader with emergency contact number(s);
- a signed consent form;
- relevant information about their child's health which might be relevant to the visit.

15.1 Parental Consent

The Beacon will seek consent on an individual basis for all educational visits offsite that take place within the school's normal hours (eg visits to local amenities, environmental studies, swimming and sporting fixtures). For local trips parents provide consent at the start of the academic year and are notified of trips that are outgoing via Arbor.

If parents withhold consent the pupil will not be taken on the visit and the curricular aims of the visit will be delivered to the pupil. Pupils can only go on the visit if the signed consent form has been received.

Verbal consents will not be accepted.

16. Emergency Controls

The school emergency procedures for educational visits, is that the Activity Leader (if possible) is to contact school directly and speak to a member of the Leadership Team, in the first instance it is to be the Assistant Headteacher of the zone of the pupils on the activity. For overnight and overseas visits a designated member of the Leadership Team will be available on call for the duration of the visit. All major incidents will be reported direct to the Head of School or Executive Headteacher in their absence, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Activity Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency school contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next of kin, as appropriate.

17. Insurance

School buys into the Local Authority Annual school travel insurance. All members of staff involved in arranging trips are given the relevant details as outlined in the insurance schedule.

If an external provider is providing an activity, staff or accommodation then the Activity Leader is responsible for obtaining a copy of their liability insurance and relevant qualifications for the activity. There also may be a requirement for details of DBS held by the staff.

18. Evaluation

The Activity Leader will evaluate specific activities/visits and complete a post activity report. This will be returned to the EVC (Admin) within 5 days.

19. Appendix 1

Initial Application

- Teacher completes initial request 4 weeks (8 weeks before overseas & Adventurous) prior to trip sent to AHT of zone for approval. (cognito form EV1)
- Approved application sent to EVC Admin.
- If there is funding, transport this will need to be approved before and included in the application before its approved by the AHT, students attending trip/activity must be listed on the application.

File Preperation

- Application recieved from AHT.
- File created and EVOLE application started.
- EVC Admin will request the following from the activity leader (Itinerary, RA and any other information required).
- Risk Assesement and Student medical details may be checked by EVA and Pupil Support Manager .
- Trip folder produced and sent to EVC for approval 2 weeks before trip/activity date.
- Activity/Trip leader informed the activity/trip is approved and is provided details of the folder and contents.
- InVentry updated and group created with student names etc.

EVC Admin Management

- Folder held in main reception until day of Activity/Trip, then signed out to staff lead.
- On the day of activity/trip or pre agreed date folder and first aid kit is handed to lead staff.
- Once activty/trip is completed folder and first aid kit is returned to main reception.
- Post activity report if required will be sent to staff lead to be completd and returned within 5 days.

Appendix 2

Flow Chart for School Day Trip

