



***SKAPE* Educational Visits Policy**

March 2025



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 *SKAPE* 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 our premises is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during session time, or outside the normal hours of our provision.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, SKAPE

1. Adopts the Local Authority's (LA) document: '**Durham County Council Educational Visits, Off-Site Activities and On-Site Adventures Policy and Guidance**' (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 and on site adventures.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with SKAPE 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 'Provision Learning Area' that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal hours of our provision.**
These follow the 'Provision 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 and submitted to the EVC for checking and 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. Note that there are a number of venues which have been given delegated approval so the Head can approve – see Evolve for the most up to date list.

Roles and Responsibilities

Visit leaders, supported by the EVC, 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 EVC and/or Manager 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 Kelly Watson, 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 identified Local Authority representative. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

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 Manager 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.

Emergency Procedures

Every visit will have nominated emergency contacts. If the visit is off site for only the duration of our provision, the SKAPE mobile telephone number is sufficient to give as an emergency contact. However, if the visit is of a residential nature **two** 24hr contact numbers will be identified (i.e. mobile and/or home phone number). The emergency contacts will have a copy of the Emergency Card (EV8) with the relevant emergency contact details on. They will also have access to all the relevant medical and next of kin information. The visit leader will have a completed Emergency Card (EV7) with them at all times (this will detail the contact details for the emergency contacts).

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

SKAPE 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 establishment'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.

Educational Visits Checklist

SKAPE 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'.

Parental Consent

Consent is not required for activities within the Provision Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during our normal operating hours. However, parents will always be informed of the detail when their child is undertaking an educational visit.

Written consent is only requested for activities which need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside of provision hours. A 'one off' consent will be signed by parents when their child has a place at SKAPE. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the provision.

However, specific parental consent will be obtained for visits of a residential, overseas or adventurous nature. For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.



Inclusion

At SKAPE, we value diversity and believe that equality at our provision should permeate all aspects of our provision, including equality of opportunity for activities and visits. It is the collective responsibility of every member of SKAPE. Every member of SKAPE should feel safe, secure, valued and of equal worth.

SKAPE will make reasonable adjustments to avoid disabled participants being placed at a substantial disadvantage. However, the Equality Act 2010 does not require us to place employees or participants at risk of injury or ill health in order to make reasonable adjustments.

If appropriate, we may ask the parent/carer of a particular pupil to accompany them on the visit. If there are any concerns about whether our provision can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of others on a visit due to the specific needs of a pupil we will seek advice from the DCC Health & Safety Team.

Charging / funding for visits

SKAPE will arrange payment for visits on an individual visit basis, visits such as residential trips, which will be more expensive, will have arrangements in place for payment to be made gradually over a period of time leading up to the visit. Those pupils who receive specific benefits may be entitled to attend the visit with no charge. This will be assessed on a case by case basis.

Transport

Use of staff cars to transport pupils – SKAPE follows the Local Authority advice.

Use of Parents and Volunteers Cars – SKAPE follows the guidance in the DCC Educational Visits Policy. The Parent and Volunteer Drivers Agreement form (EV5) will be completed and retained. This will be done on an annual basis. SKAPE will ensure supervision arrangements are considered and the relevant DBS checks are undertaken. We will also complete the Driving at Work Risk Assessment. (this will also be done where employees are using their own vehicle to transport pupils.)

When transporting pupils in private vehicles SKAPE will ensure the relevant car seats are used as required by law and that the appropriate insurance is in place.

Insurance

SKAPE is covered by their own Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance for activities when away from the premises, home base or when employees are working in the community within the UK. We are not covered for personal accident benefits or loss of personal property while on educational visits. If necessary, we can arrange this insurance for individual visits.

For overseas visits separate insurance will be taken out.



Appendix 1 – Provision Learning Area

General

All visits/activities needed to be recorded on EVOLVE.

Operating Procedure for Provision Learning Area

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

- Road traffic including crossing busy highways.
- 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 Manager or Manager's deputy will 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.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults, however, staff to pupil ratios will be determined on a "by activity" basis and will be dynamically risk assessed.
- 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.
- All remotely supervised work in the Provision Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving the provision.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will ensure an information pack, including a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return is given to a senior member of staff remaining on the premises. A work mobile is taken with activity party and the number is included in the information pack.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles, helmets)

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

The provision'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.



2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team or will be able to always contact an experienced senior manager.
3. For activities that take place during provision 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 provision 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 establishment'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 Provision Learning Area, the visit leader will carry an Emergency Card (EV7).
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders.

Date	Reason for Change	Approved By	Revision Number
10/07/23	Initial Policy	K Watson	01
01/03/24	Policy Review	K Watson	02
01/09/25	Policy Review	K Watson	03