

Offsite and Educational Visits Protocol



Equalities Statement

In our Trust we work to ensure that there is equality of opportunity for all members of our community who hold a range of protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, as well as having regard to other factors which have the potential to cause inequality, such as socio-economic factors. For further information, please see our Equalities Policy.

Document Management	
Version Number:	1.0
Date Approved:	September 2025
Next Review Date:	September 2026
Approved By:	Safeguarding Leadership Group
Responsible For:	Safeguarding Leadership Group

Policy Revision Log	
Date	Version No. Brief Detail of Change
September 2025	V1

1. Introduction

Swale Academies Trust believes that every young person has the right to experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of their learning and personal development, regardless of their age, ability, or circumstances.

Every effort should be made to make educational visits accessible to all who wish to participate, irrespective of need or disability. Teachers should plan for inclusion from the outset, and should make appropriate 'reasonable adjustments' to enable the participation of SEND pupils. Failure to do so contravenes the The Equality Act 2010 and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001.

Proper and full concern for safeguarding and health and safety must be an imperative at every stage.

This policy complies with:

- the guidance set out by the government:

[Health & Safety on Educational Visits](#)

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

[Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025](#)

It is essential that any person(s) responsible for organising and/or leading off site visits has read the principles of the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance for the management of outdoor learning, off site visits and learning outside the classroom.

[OEAP National Guidance](#)

Local authorities provide online educational trips and visits approval monitoring systems for their schools. The Trust expects all schools to use their local system. The cost of this should be included in the school budget. Details of each system are included in the information below.

2. Kent Schools

Kent County Council has delegated the responsibility for the safe planning and management of educational visits, including adventurous and residential activities, to the Headteacher and Governing Body of the school or establishment.

Kent schools must follow the [Kent Notification and Approval Process](#) in line with the [Kent Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits Policy Statement](#).

All Kent schools must use EVOLVE - KCC's online educational visits approval and monitoring system:

[Kent County Councils's EVOLVE](#)

3. East Sussex Schools

East Sussex schools must follow the [ESCC Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy](#).

All East Sussex schools must use EXEANT, ESCC's online educational visits approval and monitoring system.

[East Sussex County's Exeant](#)

4. Insurance

The Trust holds School Journey insurance through Zurich Insurance Group which covers domestic and overseas trips, excluding winter sports and other adventurous activities. Winter sports cover must be arranged separately through a registered tour operator or other appropriately registered organisation. A copy of the Insurance certificate should be taken on all overseas visits.

5. Aims and Purposes of Educational Visits within Trust Schools

An educational visit is any outing where pupils are leaving the school site. This may be for a day trip, a local visit, sports events or residential visits. Trust schools have a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom, some of which takes place beyond the statutory school day and beyond the school premises.

Each year a number of educational visits and activities will take place off the school site and/or out of school hours. Such visits will afford students with real life and memorable experiences that will lead to improved academic and social outcomes.

The Trust has given its approval to the following types of activities being arranged in support of the educational aims of each school:

- Out of hours clubs (music, drama, art, science, sport, homework, etc)
- School teams / fixtures
- Regular nearby visits (including village halls, libraries, shops, parks and woodlands, places of worship, farms)
- Day visits for particular year groups (including to theatres, cinemas, museums, art galleries, exhibitions, places of worship, zoos, theme parks)
- Residential visits
- Adventurous activities, which might be classed as higher risk, such as sailing, skiing, ice-skating, climbing, abseiling, trekking, caving etc.
- Trips abroad can have extra risks and need a higher level of risk assessment. Schools must make sure any organisation that is providing activities holds the LOtC (Learning Outside the Classroom) Quality Badge or similar local accreditation.

6. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

Every Trust school must appoint an Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) to oversee trips undertaken by school groups. The EVC must be an experienced teacher, who will either be a member of the leadership team or on the upper pay scale.

The EVC must have completed the EVC training, updated every three years, and keep updated with any changes to policy and guidance related to the organisation of educational visits. The Trust encourages schools to use the training provided by their Local Authority.

ESCC: [Outdoor Education Service](#)

Kent: [Educational Visits Training](#)

Alternatively there are online providers, such as:

[EVOLVE advice training courses](#)

[Babcock LDP – Outdoor Education Training](#)

Schools must ensure that any online training is of suitable quality and provides the necessary accreditations for the EVC to carry out all aspects of the role. The responsibilities of the EVC are to:

- Be appropriately trained with evidence of accreditation (every three years).
- Adhere to and implement the ESCC Policy or KCC Regulations and Guidance in their school.
- Ensure adequate appropriate insurance is in place and be familiar with the conditions and exclusions of the Trust's school journey policy.
- Ensure that systems and procedures in relation to school trips are reviewed regularly.
- Authorise the school visit form (Appendix 1) alongside the Headteacher. In East Sussex schools the approval of intended visits is electronic on the Exeant system.
- Read and authorise entries entered on the EVOLVE / EXEANT system. At this point, any amendments/queries will be noted through EVOLVE / EXEANT.
- Read and authorise risk assessments through the EVOLVE / EXEANT system.
- Provide advice and support to the Visit Leader and other accompanying adults as needed.
- Check that all visits have an emergency contact and the emergency contact is an appropriate person.
- Ensure staff evaluate visits that have taken place and report accidents and near misses appropriately.

2. Visit Leader

For each school trip, a designated member of staff will have the role of Visit Leader. Visit Leaders can be any member of staff involved in the trip, but should be appropriately experienced. The Visit Leader must be approved to carry out the visit by the EVC and/or appointed signatory.

2.1 The responsibilities of the Visit Leader will include, but are not limited to:

- Must have experience of leading offsite visits and be approved as competent by the establishment.
- Complete a School Visit Form to be signed by the EVC and Headteacher (In East Sussex schools the approval of intended visits is electronic on the Exeant system)
- Liaise with the Trust Finance Team who will:
 - check that the costs are accurate and that the visit is self-funding;
 - set up the trips on ParentPay so that parents can pay.
- The EVC / Visit Leader must not make any bookings or send any communications to parents until the School Visit Form has been authorised by the Trust Finance Team.
- Conduct a pre-visit wherever reasonably practical, particularly to unfamiliar sites, as a vital dimension of risk management. This allows the Visit Leader to familiarise themselves with the

environment, noting hazards, locations of facilities and assess the requirements for effective supervision. The cost of a pre-visit can be incorporated into the total cost of the visit.

- Organise details in conjunction with the office staff, for the trip such as arranging transport, entry fees, letters to parents etc. Copies of relevant risk assessments, letters to parents and itinerary must be submitted (onto web-based system).
- A completed provider questionnaire for centres providing adventure activities or tour operators that do not have a Learning Outside The Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge must be obtained and submitted (onto web-based system).
- Liaise with the Trust Finance Team who will:
 - check that the costs are accurate and that the visit is self-funding;
 - set up the trips on ParentPay so that parents can pay.
- Ensure parental permission has been obtained for the children attending the trip. Complete a record of the trip on the EVOLVE / EXEANT system, forwarding it to the EVC and appointed signatory for approval.
- Work with the EVC/assigned signatory to ensure all possible precautions are taken to ensure pupil and staff safety.
- Ensure all adults are aware of possible risks/hazards.
- Brief all adults involved, regarding the nature and the organisation of the trip.
- Debrief adults after the trip to report/address any issues and identify future actions.
- Hold details of adults accompanying the trip and the procedure to be carried out in the event of an emergency.
- Ensure a hard copy of the risk assessment and emergency plan are taken on the trip. Copies of all documentation must be left with the school office and senior leaders before departing.
- Ensure accessibility for ALL children.
- Keep a record of risk assessments in the staff shared drive for all to access.
- Organise the necessary medical information for all children attending.
- Ensure all required medicines are brought and that there is named person responsible for administering any medications, including appropriate recording of these.
- Arrange for a First Aid trained member of staff to be present.
- Be responsible for pupil groupings, adults, and additionally those pupils requiring FSM.
- Ensure that 'parent helpers' have been given a guide to parental expectations during an educational visit.
- Evaluate the visit, report and record any accidents/near misses.

2.2 As a rule, Early Career Teachers (ECTs) are not expected to be Visit Leaders unless the Headteacher is satisfied that they have the necessary experience and skills to fulfil the duties of the role.

3. Assistant Visit Leader

3.1 The responsibilities of the Visit Leader will include, but are not limited to:

- Be involved in the planning and preparation for the activity/visit, including contributing to the organisation or risk management.
- Ensure understanding of the role and responsibilities assigned and how these integrate with other staff and especially with that of the activity/visit leader.
- Contribute to the visit evaluation, and reporting and recording of accidents and near misses.

4. School Visit Approval

4.1 Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Headteacher must approve the initial plan by viewing and signing the School Visit Form. (In East Sussex, this is completed through the web-based system for recording and approving offsite visits as the system will notify the EVC and Headteacher of intended visits, allowing them to make comments and approve or decline a visit application).

4.2 Visits that include adventurous activities and/or a residential element might require approval by the Local Authority via the on-line Visit Notification and Approval system. EVOLVE / EXEANT Usernames and Passwords will be managed by the EVC.

4.3 Day visits that do not include adventurous activities but involve groups travelling both inside and outside Kent or East Sussex will be registered on EVOLVE/EXEANT.

4.4 Where external contractors are involved in organising all or part of the visit, the contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils.

4.5 For out of hours clubs, school teams and nearby visits, parents will be asked to sign a letter of consent for participation in these activities. Parents will be given the timetable for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed as soon as is practicably possible if an activity has to be cancelled.

4.6 For any visit lasting a day or more, parents will also be asked to sign a letter, which consents to their child taking part. This will include a separate medical consent form. Each school must have a standard model letter, which should be used for this purpose.

4.7 The Trust has a separate policy for 'Charging and Remissions' which applies to all educational visits.

5. Staffing

5.1 The Trust recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a school visit.

5.2 Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning and behaviour in a variety of environments. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

5.3 Any volunteer adults assisting on educational activities and visits must be DBS checked or supervised at all times.

Individuals who engage in regulated activity with young people or vulnerable adults should undergo an enhanced DBS check, with a barred list check. Therefore, it may not be necessary for a parent helper to have a DBS check for a day trip unless they meet the criteria for frequency or intensively as stated below. Where the visit involves a residential an enhanced DBS and barred list check is required.

- *Frequently is defined as "once per week or more"*
- *Intensively is defined as 4 days or more in a 30-day period or overnight (between 2am and 6am, where there is opportunity for face to face contact)*

However, it must be understood clearly that a DBS check (or other vetting and barring procedure) on its own is not a guarantee of the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

5.4 Adequate levels of supervision and staffing must be established for the journey/visit based on such factors as the sex, age and ability of the children, the presence of pupils with special educational needs, the nature/length of the journey, the environment and nature of activities to be undertaken as well as the experience and competence of the staff involved. **A minimum of two members of staff must be involved in every school journey, regardless of how many other adults are helping.**

Guidance for pupil-staff ratios:

- Nursery age children should have a ratio which is appropriate to their age/room and developmental stage.
- EYFS/reception classes should have a higher ratio of 1:4.
- One adult for every six pupils in school years 1 to 3.
- One adult for every ten to 15 pupils in school years 4 to 6.
- One adult for every 15-20 pupils in school year 7 onwards.

These staffing allocations should be regarded as minimum, as no visit should take place where pupils are accompanied by a sole adult.

5.5 When pupils are taken to off-site sports fixtures / events, they must be accompanied by a minimum of two members of staff, one of whom must be first-aid trained.

5.6 Where swimming activities are involved, there must be provision for supervision by qualified lifesavers.

5.7 SEND pupils should have, where necessary, additional adult support assigned to them to ensure their needs are met.

5.8 It is recognised as best practice that the Visit Leader should not be assigned a group. If adult numbers dictate that a group leader must have their own group, adults and groupings should be arranged so that an additional adult is with them.

5.9 The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit. This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit, briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments.

5.10 Access to first aid is considered and accessible, which is appropriate to the age of the children and their needs and relevant to the environment the group will be in.

5.11 The administration of medicines (prescribed and non-prescription) is planned for, with the relevant training for staff and consideration of the legal requirements for taking medication overseas.

6. Risk assessment

A risk assessment must be completed for all school visits and the template must comply with the Health and Safety Executive 5 Steps to Risk Assessment. This will be downloaded onto the EVOLVE / EXEANT system as part of the visit record. For regular visits, i.e to swimming lessons, a standard risk assessment may be used but will be reviewed as necessary.

The EVC and when required the Headteacher must check the risk assessment as part of the approval process.

Pupils must learn to recognise and manage risks and understand their responsibilities. Adults will involve children in risk assessment wherever possible.

7. Overseas Visits

When planning an overseas visit, before booking with a provider or tour operator, consideration must be given to the geopolitical risks associated with the destination(s). In some circumstances it will be necessary for the visit leader and EVC to complete a threat assessment. Information from the Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO) will be sought when completing the assessment as will information from the proposed tour operator and an in-country source where possible.

The threat assessment should identify the significant geopolitical risks, including civil disturbance and also highlight and address any issues focusing upon inclusivity issues such as attitudes and laws towards LGBTQ+ students and staff. This needs to be completed before booking with a provider. Please refer to government guidance prior to completing a booking such as: <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice> and <https://travelhealthpro.org.uk/> along with [Department for Education \(DfE\) guidance to schools for visits to the EU under the 'school trips and exchanges' section.](#)

Where a threat assessment is required, the results should be discussed with the OEA and EVC. In some circumstances a meeting will be required to discuss the proposed plans for the visit including the requirements and expectations of the provider. This meeting will take place at least 6 months in advance.

In situations where a school wishes to proceed with a visit despite a significant and likely threat to the group, which are not balanced by the benefits, or where the benefits could be achieved through an alternative destination the OEA will provide advice and guidance and suggest that the Academy Trust Management Board make the final decision. It is important to note that in this situation it is unlikely that, if requested, the Offsite Response Team (in the case of East Sussex academies) would provide on ground support in the event of an emergency.

For all overseas visits, parental consent needs to acknowledge that they have been fully informed of the visit arrangements, including the planned activities, accommodation type, travel arrangements and the risks involved in all aspects of the visit. Parents should also be made aware of the emergency medical facilities available to the group throughout the visit.

Once a visit has been completed, the visit leader must complete a review of the visit. This should be discussed with the EVC and significant incidents or learning should be shared with the OEA. For visits to destinations that require a threat assessment to be conducted, the visit leader EVC will need to give feedback to the OEA to highlight successes, key learning points and near misses. This meeting will take place within two weeks of returning.

8. The Expectations of Pupils and Parents

Each Trust school expects pupils to conduct themselves in line with the school's Behaviour Policy. This will be part of the conditions of booking by the parents. Guidance will be given to parents to explain that there is the potential of withdrawal prior to and during the visit if such conduct would have led to a fixed term suspension from school.

9. Emergency Procedures

9.1 Each school will appoint a member of the SLT as the emergency school contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to this person, especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

9.2 The Visit 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.

9.3 The Visit Leader will take with them a copy of the school's Major Incident Procedures, along with the contact details of the appointed emergency school contacts.

9.4 All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the school systems. The Kent Outdoor Education Unit / East Sussex County Council should also be advised of any serious incidents or accidents.

10. Inclusion

10.1 Discrimination

The Equality Act 2010 states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil to whom one of the protected characteristics applies (disability; gender reassignment; pregnancy and maternity; race; religion or belief; sex and sexual orientation) in the way that it affords (or not) the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Every effort must, therefore, be made to ensure that offsite activities and educational visits are available and accessible to all, making reasonable efforts to find a venue and activities that are suitable and accessible for the whole group to participate in fully. Visit leaders should consider the needs of the group at the earliest point when planning a visit, so they can ensure the needs of the young people are met. In some circumstances it may be impossible for reasonable adjustments to enable someone to be included on a visit, in this case it is not necessary to deprive the rest of the group however you must demonstrate that what happened was for a reason other than unfair discrimination. The reasonable adjustments template can help record and identify feasible adjustments. Please contact the OEA at the earliest point if you have any queries relating to inclusion.

10.2 Exclusion for Behaviour

Behaviour is not a protective characteristic defined by the Equality Act. It may therefore be acceptable to exclude someone from an activity or visit if their potential behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety or welfare of either themselves or others, or to the successful completion of the activity or visit. However, if the behaviour is associated with a protected characteristic, great care should be taken to ensure that unfair or illegal discrimination does not take place.

11. Transport

Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in the activity, meaning that careful planning is required.

ESCC sets out clear requirements on using mini buses and private cars. These can be found under 'documents' on Exeant, along with template letters for using private cars. If buses or coaches are hired, this should be through a reputable company.

When using public transport, inform the company of the size of the group and the date on which you will be using the transport. Be respectful to members of the public and be aware of strikes, delays and cancellations.

12. Evaluation

12.1 All visits will be evaluated by the Visit Leader with the EVC. A short evaluation report will be submitted on the EVOLVE / EXEANT system.

12.2 The EVC will ensure that any risk assessments for the visits or activities are evaluated and/or modified as a result of findings or feedback from the visit.

12.3 Any significant concerns or learning points should be shared with the OEA. Where Overseas visits have taken place, which required the need for a threat assessment to be conducted, feedback to the OEA must be completed within two weeks of returning.

This guidance should be read in conjunction with the following policies and guidance:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- School Behaviour Policy
- Kent Regulations and Guidance for the Safe Practice of Off Site Visits/Educational Visits
- ESCC Offsite Activities and Educational Visits Policy