Tanfield Lea Community Primary School

Educational Visits Policy

Opening Doors, Enriching Lives

Date: September 2026
Date for Review: September 2027

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 Tanfield Lea Community Primary School 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 the school grounds is covered by this policy, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time, or outside the normal school day.

In addition to this Educational Visits Policy, Tanfield Lea Community Primary School:

- 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).
- Adopts National Guidance www.oeapng.info, (as recommended by the LA).
- 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 school 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 and Approval
There are three 'types' of visit:

1 Visits/activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day. These follow the School 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 by the visit leader and submitted to the EVC for checking. The EVC then submits to the Head for 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 are responsible for the planning of their visits, and for entering these on EVOLVE. They should obtain outline permission for a visit from the Head Teacher or EVC 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 Mark Temple, 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. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE, and uploads generic school documents, etc.

The Head Teacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE.

The Governing Body's role is that of a 'critical friend'. There is no requirement for governors to approve visits but they will be informed at regular governor meetings what visits have taken place and what is planned. Individual governors may request 'read-only' access to EVOLVE.

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 Head Teacher 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 the school day the school 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 (ie 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.
The school 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
Tanfield Lea Community Primary School's 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'. Tanfield Lea Community Primary School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental Consent
Consent is not required for activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum during normal school time. 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 school hours. A 'one off' consent will be signed by parents when their child enrols at school. This will cover a child's participation in any of these types of activities throughout their time at the school.

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
Tanfield Lea Community Primary School 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 school can provide for a pupil's safety or the safety of others on a visit due the specific needs of a pupil we will seek advice from the DCC Health and Safety Team.

Charging/Funding for Visits
Tanfield Lea Community Primary School 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 – Tanfield Lea Community Primary School follows the Local Authority advice.

Use of Parents and Volunteers Cars – Tanfield Lea Community Primary School follows the guidance in the DCC Educational Visits Policy. The Parent and Volunteer Drivers Agreement form (EV5) will be completed and retained in school. This will be done on an annual basis. Tanfield Lea Community Primary School 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 Tanfield Lea Community Primary School will ensure the relevant car seats are used as required by law and that the appropriate insurance is in place.

Insurance
Tanfield Lea Community Primary School is covered by DCC Employers Liability and Public Liability insurance for activities when away from the school site, 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.

Swimming Lessons
Swimming lessons are held at The Louisa Centre, Stanley. Children are transported from Tanfield Lea Community Primary School to The Louisa Centre via coach and are accompanied by two members of staff.

Children change for swimming lessons in separate girls and boys changing rooms and make their way to the poolside, where they are supervised by Tanfield Lea Community staff and the swimming coach.

Parents will be advised in advance when swimming lessons take place.

Dismissal of Pupils after Evening Activities
When children remain at school for after school activities, they are dismissed by staff when parents/carers arrive at the school.

Year 5 and 6 children are allowed to walk home alone. Children are reminded that when walking outside if their adult is not there, they should return to school.

Parents will be advised in advance of any after school activities taking place.

Appendix 1 – School Learning Area

General
Visits/activities within the School Learning Area that are part of the normal curriculum and take place during the normal school day follow the Operating Procedure below.

These visits/activities:
- do not require parental consent, but parents will be advised in advance when children are leaving the school premises;
- do not normally need additional risk assessments/notes (other than following the Operating Procedure below).

Boundaries
The boundaries of the School Learning Area are venues within walking distance from the school and include, but are not limited to, the following frequently used venues:
- Local residential care homes
- Local places of worship
- Local library
- Local shops/supermarkets
- Local play parks/recreational areas
- Local sports centre
- Other local schools

Operating Procedure for School Learning Area
The following are potentially significant issues/hazards within our School Learning Area:
- Road traffic
- 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)

These are managed by a combination of the following:
- The Head Teacher or Deputy Head Teacher shall 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 and office.
- The concept and Operating Procedure of the School Learning Area is explained to all new parents when their child joins the school.
- There will normally be a minimum of two adults accompanying the children.
- Staff are familiar with the area, including any 'no go areas', and have practised appropriate group management techniques.
- Pupils have been trained and have practised 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 School Learning Area is done in 'buddy' pairs as a minimum.
- Pupils' clothing and footwear is checked for appropriateness prior to leaving school.
- Staff are aware of any relevant pupil medical information and ensure that any required medication is available.
- Staff will deposit in the office a list of all pupils and staff, a proposed route, and an estimated time of return.
- A school mobile is taken with each group and the office have a note of the number.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is taken when needed (eg gloves, goggles).

Appendix 2 – Emergency Procedure

The school'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 (during school hours this is the office).
2 This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team, or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager at all times.
3 For activities that take place during normal school 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 normal school 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 School 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.