Villa Real School

together we achieve

Educational Visits Policy

Responsibility: Angela Doogan/ Peter Jameson/ Jamie Coram/ Georgia Young

Date: September 2026

To be reviewed: September 2027

Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every pupil and student 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 Villa Real School a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits to pupils/students 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 participant's 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 .i.e. encouraging pupils/students 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.

Villa Real School adopts Durham County Council's Educational Visits, Off-Site Activities and On-Site Adventures Policy and guidance (September 2025) and the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance as the basis for all educational visits, planning and approval procedures. Where this school policy is silent, the requirements of Durham County Council and OEAP guidance shall apply.

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, Villa Real School:

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.

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with school policy (i.e. 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 Visits 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 Educational Visits Coordinator (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 venues which have been given delegated approval so the Head can approve – see Evolve for the most up to date list.

All "Off-Site" visits must be approved by the Headteacher.

All visits requiring Local Authority approval must be submitted on EVOLVE at least 21 days prior to the visit date. This includes residential visits, overseas visits, adventurous activities, Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and any visits requiring County council approval.

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 Headteacher 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.

1. EV4 – Parental consent form (Appendix 2)
2. EV2 – School risk assessment

3. Venue/provider's risk assessment where available
4. Copy of letter informing parent/carer of visit
5. EV6 – External provider form if appropriate

Where external providers are used, an EV6 External Provider Form must be completed unless the provider holds the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality badge. Visit Leaders must satisfy themselves that providers are suitably qualified, insured and competent to deliver the activity.

The Educational Visits Coordinators (EVC) are for Villa real School are:

- Angela Doogan
- Peter Jameson
- Jamie Coram
- Georgia Young

EVCs will undertake appropriate EVC training and refresher training and act on behalf of the headteacher in supporting, monitoring visits through EVOLVE. They will maintain records of visits and ensure current DfE, Durham County Council and OEAP guidance is available to all staff.

The Headteacher has responsibility for authorising all visits, and for submitting all overseas, residential or adventurous activity visits to the LA for approval, via EVOLVE. In the absence if the Headteacher, the Deputy Head or the School Business Manager can approve.

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 have '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 Headteacher will consider 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/students, the venue, and the activities to be undertaken.

Staffing levels will be determined through risk assessment, taking account of:

- Pupils' age and needs
- SEND and medical requirements
- Nature and complexity of activities
- Venue and environmental conditions
- Experience and competence of staff

DBS and Volunteers

Volunteers accompanying visits must hold an appropriate DBS clearance in line with current safeguarding requirements. Volunteers without DBS clearance must not have unsupervised access to pupils.

Remote Supervision

Where remote supervision is used, pupils must be appropriately trained, equipped and briefed. Parents must be informed where remote supervision arrangements form part of the educational objectives of the visit. The visit leader retains overall responsibility at all times.

Risk Assessments

Villa Real School adopt Durham's three stage approach. Our risk assessment arrangements include:

- Generic risk assessment for routine or regularly repeated activities.
- Event specific risk assessments considering the venue, transport participants, activities and contingency planning
- Ongoing dynamic risk assessments carried out continuously throughout the visit by all accompanying staff.

The visit leader is responsible for ensuring significant findings are recorded and shared appropriately

Villa Real School recognises that standard ratios are guidance only and do not replace professional judgement. All visits must have sufficient staff to ensure effective supervision at all times.

Water margin activities

Activities taking place near water, including rivers, ponds, streams, lakes beaches and coastal environments require specific considerations within risk assessments. Staff will follow OEAP group safety at water margin guidance. Water margin activities are not generally classified as adventurous however require heightened supervision and planning.

Accident Reporting
Any serious accident, injury or incident that occurs during an educational visit must be reported immediately to the headteacher and Durham County Council Health and Safety Team in accordance with local authority procedures. All accidents and incidents will be recorded and investigated as appropriate.

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 (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 and/or an iPad with the details on. They will also have access to all the relevant medical and next of kin information. The visit leader will always have a completed Emergency Card (EV7) with them (this will detail the contact details for the emergency contacts). Any incident must be called into SMT on the trip or a small incident immediately upon arrival back in School.

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 1). 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
Villa Real 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'. Villa Real School's Educational Visits Checklist may be downloaded from EVOLVE Resources.

Parental/Carer Consent
All "Off-Site" visits/activities will be covered by parental consent prior to the visit/activity taking place, however, parents/carers will always be informed in detail when their child is undertaking an educational visit/activity.

A 'one off' consent will be signed by parents/carers at the start of each new academic year. This will cover a child's participation in any of the activities in the local area, but parents/carers must be informed in writing.

However, specific parental consent will be obtained for visits of a residential, overseas or adventurous nature (including The Duke of Edinburgh's Award). For these visits, sufficient information must be made available to parents/carers so that consent is given on a 'fully informed' basis.

Inclusion
Villa Real School will make reasonable adjustments to avoid students 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 to make reasonable adjustments.

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

Charging / funding for visits
Villa Real 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/students 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
All drivers must have a current MIDAS certificate and D1 endorsement on their driving license and have been authorised to drive any school vehicle or hire vehicle on behalf of Villa Real School. All drivers will carry out daily checks in accordance with DCC's, "Drivers Daily Safety Inspection and Vehicle Defect Report Book".

All Villa Real School's vehicles are serviced and maintained by DCC under their Service Level Agreement. Any defects on the bus must be reported to Georgia Young immediately.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils/students – All staff wishing to use their private motor vehicles during their working day for school business must bring in their driving license/insurance details for inspection (insurance must have stated on it "business insurance"). Drivers must also complete an EV5 declaring their vehicle is in a "road worthy" condition. Documents will need to be updated annually.

Insurance
Villa Real 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.

First Aid Cover/Emergency Medication
All "off-site" activities will be covered by a fully qualified first aider, which must be relevant to the group's needs. They must also carry an up to date basic first aid kit that will be "fit for purpose".
Emergency medication must also be taken if required, paying particular attention to names, dosage and date of expiry. Additional information can be requested through the school nurse, with only approved members of staff being able to administer any emergency medication.

Behaviour
All "off-site" visits must have adequately trained and competent staff to manage all types of behaviour displayed by students, including both intermediate and advance levels during their visit. All staff being used to manage behaviour must have an up-to-date certificate from Team Teach and where required a valid first aid certificate. More information can be obtained from Villa Real School's policy on behaviour.

Pupils with individual risk assessments must be evaluated on the lead up to the visit to determine level of risk.

Disposal of Equipment
Adventurous equipment such as ropes, harnesses, flares etc. must be disposed of safely by a competent person.

Delegated Approval Venues
These venues would otherwise require LA approval because they are residential venues or adventurous activity providers (or both!). When adding your provider/venue to Evolve ensure you select the one which has 'approval delegated to Head' noted next to it and it will only require Headteacher authorisation. The venues are:

- Beamish Wild
- Durham Climbing Centre
- Kingswood, Hexham
- Moorhouse Scout Centre
- Robinwood, Baraugh Hall
- Rock Antics, Newton Aycliffe

Appendix 1 – 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 always contact an experienced senior manager.
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 if 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 all visits that take place "off-site", the visit leader will carry an Emergency Card (EV7) & Emergency Card for Emergency Contacts (EV8) and two iPads with pupil's personal information.
7. This Emergency Procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders

Appendix 2 –

PARENTAL CONSENT / MEDICAL FORM **EV4**

School	Villa Real School		
Name of Pupil / Young Person		Date of birth	

1. General consent

I agree to my child participating in educational visits and other off-site activities including –

- All school organised off-site activities before, during and after the school day where a higher level of risk management is required.
- All visits (including residential visits) which take place during the holidays or a weekend.
- Adventure activities at any time.
- Off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day.
- All off-site activities for nursery schools.

In exceptional circumstances a further consent may be requested but the school will send parents information about each trip or off-site activity before it takes place.

You can, if you wish, tell the school that you do not want your child to take part in any particular visit or activity where parental consent is required.

Please note that parental consent is not required for low risk activities during the school day where the activity is a normal part of your child's education at the school.

This consent will apply for the duration of my child's enrolment at the above school or until withdrawn in writing.

2. Medical information about your child

I agree to my child receiving medication as instructed and any emergency dental, medical or surgical treatment, including anaesthetic or blood transfusion, as considered necessary by the medical authorities present.

I will inform the school/group leader of any changes in medication that is relevant to educational visits and off-site activities.

Please list any medical conditions or prescribed medication you want the school and group leader to be aware of. Include details of all medication your child will need to take on visits / off-site activities.

List all medical needs -

I hereby undertake to indemnify the school, Durham County Council and the staff accompanying the group against any costs and expenses reasonably incurred by them on behalf of my child during the visit (for example, the cost of replacement food or clothing not supplied for a trip/visit). This indemnity will not extend to any claims, damages, costs or expenses against the risk of which Durham County Council or member of staff are entitled to be indemnified under any policy of insurance.

3. Signature of parent/ carer. **Please sign this form if you agree with all the above.**			
Name (capitals)		Relationship to young person	
Signature		Date	
Emergency contact number –			