



## Policy for the Management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities

January 2024

### 1. Introduction

This policy covers all outdoor education, visits and off-site activities organised through the school and for which the Governing Body and Headteacher are responsible. The Governing Body endorses the Devon County Council /Torbay Council policy document “Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health and Safety Policy 2022” (OEVOSA) as the basis for the school’s policy for the management of outdoor learning, visits and off-site activities. The purpose of this policy is to explain *how* the overall OEVOSA policy will be applied in practical terms at a local level, and in particular, the specific roles, responsibilities and arrangements that will apply at Mill Water School. This policy also complements and should be read in conjunction with the school’s Health and Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

### 2. Responsibilities of the Headteacher

The Headteacher will:

- ensure all outdoor education sessions, visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
- have overall responsibility for the approval of all outdoor education sessions, visits and activities, based on compliance with the OEVOSA document and recognised good practice, even where this task may have been delegated to another named person
- ensure that all off-site visits, and especially residential visits, are carried out with reference to the School Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct
- ensure that there is a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) to oversee adherence to the OEVOSA policy and that the tasks associated with this role are clearly outlined in this policy
- ensure outdoor education and off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks, manage the activity and manage the specific group
- provide relevant induction, training and other Continuous Professional Development opportunities for staff involved in the provision of outdoor education, visits and off-site activities
- ensure that for all outdoor education sessions, off-site visits and activities, risks have been assessed, the significant findings of these assessments recorded and any appropriate safety measures implemented accordingly

### **3. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator**

Although holding the ultimate responsibility, the Headteacher has delegated specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent EVC. The EVC is responsible for carrying out the following agreed tasks and attending the relevant training and update training provided by the Local Authority (LA).

Name of EVCs: Andy Pratt/Becky Reguige (last training November 2023)

The functions delegated to the EVC are:

- to be the principal contact with the LA over planned visits
- to establish monitoring systems to ensure that educational visits are undertaken in accordance with OEVOSA and the school specific arrangements named in this policy
- to ensure that the management of visits and off-site activities is informed by an appropriate risk assessment
- to draw up the Standard Operating Procedures for 'routine and regular' visits and activities
- to manage and update the Evolve website, including updating staff lists and training records
- to ensure that approval and endorsement arrangements for all visits are in accordance with OEVOSA requirements
- to provide staff with support, advice and information that they need to comply with OEVOSA requirements
- to ensure that leaders and staff have any relevant qualifications and are competent to lead and support particular visits and activities as outlined in OEVOSA
- to ensure that procedures to inform parents and to obtain their consent where necessary are in place
- to ensure that appropriate emergency arrangements are in place for visits and off-site activities
- to review accident and incident reports relating to outdoor education, visits and off-site activities to ensure that any lessons are learnt
- to ensure that any third party provider/contractor/coach has been vetted for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA.

### **4. Responsibilities of the Visit/Session Leader**

The Visit/Session Leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity
- obtain approval and, where appropriate, LA endorsement for the visit in line with OEVOSA and the specific arrangements of this policy prior to undertaking the activity
- assess the risks to staff, pupils and members of the public presented by the visit or activity in order to identify and implement any safety measures. This process will be undertaken in line with the arrangements described in paragraph 8 of this policy
- carry out specific activities in accordance with the detail of OEVOSA
- use the school planning checklist provided in OEVOSA to ensure all procedures have been followed
- vet any third party provider/contractor/coach for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA
- brief all supervising staff, volunteers and pupils in roles, responsibilities and expectations
- inform parents about the visit and gain their consent in accordance with arrangements described in OEVOSA
- establish appropriate emergency and contingency arrangements for the planned visit or activity which will include the identification of sufficient First Aid cover
- continually re-assess risks during the activity and make adjustments accordingly

## **5. Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in outdoor education, visits and off-site activities**

Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the Visit/Session Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of others including pupils on the visit
- Take time to understand their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity
- Read the relevant Standard Operating Procedures and any other Risk Assessments associated with the activity
- Be clear about emergency contacts and details

## **6. Responsibilities of pupils**

Whilst taking part in outdoor education or off-site activities, pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the Visit Leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Pupils should:

- Avoid unnecessary risks
- Follow instructions of the visit leader and other members of staff
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct
- Inform a member of staff of safety concerns

## **7. Responsibilities of parents**

Parents have an important role in deciding whether any outdoor education, visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should:

- Support the application of any agreed code of conduct
- Inform the visit leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit
- Provide an emergency contact number
- Provide consent in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA

## **8. Responsibilities of External Providers**

- External providers are third parties contracted to provide instruction or coaching for 'adventurous' activities, residential accommodation, travel packages, or overseas expeditions.
- Employees of external providers are usually responsible for technical instruction; but overall supervision is the establishment's responsibility and as such the establishment retains the Duty of Care of the children at all times.
- Establishments must have a clear contract with external providers and at a minimum, every provider must complete the Provider Questionnaire (SOE5), unless they already hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.
- Establishments using external providers must check that all licences, including any ALAA licence and insurance policies are up to date at the time of the visit. Validity of AALA licences can be checked here: [www.aals.org.uk/aals/providersearch.php](http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/providersearch.php). Holding the LOTC Quality Badge, an AALA licence and/or the completion of the SOE5 helps to confirm that management standards are appropriate.
- Venues such as: theme parks, water parks, fun fairs, museums, theatres, zoos, shops, skate parks etc are NOT classed as providers and are not required to complete a SOE5. They may have chosen to gain the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) Quality Badge, but this is not requirement of the Local Authority for such venues.

- All venues open to the public or providing services to customers are bound by the Health and Safety at Work Act (1974) to provide a safe working environment for the public, visitors and customers. Establishments are not required to ask such venues for risk assessments.

## 9. Risk Assessment

Mill Water School is committed to a wide variety of outdoor activities, many of which will be repeated over each academic year, where the risks will be very similar or the same. Therefore, when visits/sessions are 'routine and regular' in that they occur repeatedly each academic year, the measures taken to control these risks are listed in the Mill Water School Standard Operating Procedures (SOP). These are the control measures that will apply to all such visits and activities and have been drawn up by the EVC and will be brought to the attention of anyone undertaking the role of Visit/Session Leader.

In assessing the risks presented by a planned visit or activity, the Visit/Session Leader must judge if the SOP are adequate for controlling the risks. For each visit/activity, the SOP document will be reviewed electronically and the Visit/Session Leader will *either* confirm these as adequate for the proposed visit/activity on the Mill Water School Going Out Form, *or* will indicated the additional control measures needed on the Going Out/Session Form. The Visit Leader will also review the Individual Pupil Risk Assessments for every pupil participating in the activity and confirm that these are adequate on the Going Out/Session Form.

Any ad hoc visit which is not repeated regularly, plus any activities delivered by school staff falling within the definition of Category B, will have a separate stand-alone risk assessment, as will any overseas Category C visit. This process will be undertaken by the Visit/Session Leader who, whilst being supported by the EVC, will be competent and equipped to complete this task. To meet statutory requirements and to ensure sufficient communication with other staff involved, this risk assessment will be recorded using a Visit/Session Specific Risk Assessment. Category B visits need to be risk assessed using the "Day visits using transport" form and uploaded by an EVC to Evolve for LA approval.

## 10. Approval of outdoor education/off-site activities

The Headteacher/member of SLT/ELT will be responsible for approving all outdoor education and off-site activities subject to assurances that arrangements are in line with this policy and risks are adequately controlled. This includes approving the Visit/Session Leader for each visit/session or off-site activity. Session Forms relating to activities in the orchard area which involve the use of tools will require the specific approval of the EVC (Andy Pratt) who is Forest School trained.

There are 3 categories of visit:

### **Category A:**

Non-adventurous visits i.e. visits to local places of worship, farms, public places etc.

Non-adventurous residential visits i.e. cultural visits to towns/cities etc

### **Category B:**

Adventurous visits where activities are *delivered* by school staff (i.e. Ten Tors, kayaking etc).

Adventurous day visits led by external providers (i.e. visits to climbing centres, a pony trekking centre etc).

Adventurous residential visits to outdoor centres.

### **Category C:**

Visits of all types outside the UK.

The EVC, SLT or Headteacher will check the status of a trip by referring to the table outlined in section 7 of OEVOSA.

In-line with the requirements of OEVOSA, details of Category B and C visits will be uploaded to the Evolve on-line system to facilitate the approval by the Headteacher ahead of final endorsement by the Local Authority Adviser for Outdoor Education.

The policy of Mill Water School is that Category A visits will not be uploaded to the Evolve system and will be approved by SLT/ELT. However, the SOP and Going Out/Session Forms will be available for Governors, the Headteacher and the EVCs to monitor the management of outdoor education and off-site visits.

## **11. Safeguarding**

The safety and welfare of children is paramount. In the event of a safeguarding issue or concern being identified during the trip or visit, the visit leader should follow the school's child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff and volunteers on the trip should be made aware of these before the trip or activity takes place. Arrangements should be in place to enable contact with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead outside normal school hours if necessary. Contact details should be communicated to all staff/volunteers on the trip (as well as the visit leader) in case the safeguarding concern is about the visit leader.

## **12. The provision of training and information**

A copy of this policy, along with the overall OEVOSA document, will be made available to all staff within the school who may be responsible for participating in outdoor education, off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy. Access will also be made available to the overarching OEVOSA policy, and additional guidance information, via the Devon Education Services Website [www.devonvisits.org.uk](http://www.devonvisits.org.uk)

The Headteacher will ensure that staff leading or participating in outdoor education and visits are competent for the activities involved. When required, specific training will be undertaken and competencies maintained in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA. This process will be overseen by the Headteacher and records of qualifications will be uploaded to the Evolve system.

## **13. Action in the case of emergency**

The Headteacher will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place before approving visits. The Visit/Session Leader will identify these arrangements via a process of risk assessment as described in section 8. Where necessary, this assessment must include the identification of contingency plans. It will also include the identification of sufficient First Aiders, as well as emergency contact details which must include a school contact for outside normal hours if necessary. Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points.

## **14. Monitoring and review**

The governing body will monitor the application of this policy in operational practice by periodic scrutiny of Going Out Forms and Session Forms, scrutiny of accidents occurring during off site visits or outdoor education sessions, visits to school, and by discussions with the Headteacher and EVC.

The Governors will review this policy:

- Every two years
- After any significant changes to the management of outdoor education locally
- After any significant changes to the OEVOSA document
- After an incident