



Learning Outside the Classroom

The Woodlands

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Contents

1. Rationale.....	2
2. Context	2
3. Aims	3
4. Venues.....	3
5. Outcomes	4
6. Entitlements	4
7. Roles and Responsibilities	5
8. Emergency Procedures	7
9. Parental Consent.....	7
10. Risk Assessments	8
11. Monitoring and Evaluation	11

1. Rationale

The Woodlands considers it vital that we maintain a broad and balanced curriculum. This includes ensuring that pupils have the opportunity to experience first-hand and have chance to see and take part in activities outside the classroom. Our school grounds provide rich opportunities that can engage all pupils effectively in understanding about sustainability and the environment. Visits outside of school, are built into our curriculum and enhance children's learning.

2. Context

The Woodlands 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 The Woodlands 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 making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practising strategic awareness.
 - Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust.
 - Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects.
 - Enhanced opportunities for 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 to become more risk aware as opposed to risk averse.
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- 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.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop life skills as appropriate for their own personal development
- Opportunities for staff and pupils to build relationships

3. Aims

- To raise pupils' achievement
- To consolidate and reinforce pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding, particularly in relation to literacy and numeracy
- To develop confidence, motivation and self-discipline in learning
- To promote positive attitudes to lifelong learning
- To develop skills in using a broader range of resources
- To promote effective home/school links
- To promote a broader responsibility for the improvement of pupil learning
- To introduce pupils to a range of new experiences
- To strengthen links across curriculum areas
- To develop the curriculum through using the local environment and community
- To offer pupils exciting and stimulating experiences that enthuse them in their learning
- To develop self-esteem through providing a range of opportunities for pupils to excel
- To develop pupils' social skills, independence and resilience through experiencing Outdoor Activities

4. Venues

- Pupils experience a range of trips/ visits each year.
- Some pupils take part in 'gardening' and 'Forest School' activities over the year.
- Pupils use the grounds of the school in a variety of ways to enhance their learning and social engagement.

- Pupils have opportunities to visit community buildings during the year and will use other community resources e.g. park, library.
- Pupils have the opportunity to participate in a range of adventurous trips throughout the year.
- Some pupils have the opportunity to take part in a residential visit

5. Outcomes

- Develop a more positive attitude toward learning within the curriculum
- Develop a sense of achievement and enjoyment in that achievement through working independently of The Woodlands
- Raise awareness of how information can be acquired, absorbed and used in a range of contexts
- Leave this school with skills which will enable them to study independently in preparation for their education and beyond
- Prepare pupils for return to mainstream setting
- Pupil's achievements are recognised and celebrated

6. Entitlements

- All pupils are entitled to opportunities to maximise their learning potential whilst attending The Woodlands
- Pupils are supported and rewarded by The Woodlands in return for making a commitment to extending their learning
- Pupils should receive work tasks appropriate to their ability and needs
- Achievements are incorporated into individual learning records

Parents are entitled to:

- Be informed of this policy and the details regarding visits/activities
- Feedback from staff where appropriate

Teaching staff are entitled to:

- Co-operation from parents, encouraging their child to attend outdoor visits and for pupils to have appropriate clothing/footwear etc.
- Copies of the work produced are filed by the coordinator and are made available to the schools at transition
- Have their views and thoughts considered about the appropriateness of visits and activities

- Documented review which takes place on an annual basis and feedback is incorporated into the School Self Review process

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility for creating opportunities for learning outside the classroom lies with the whole school community. It requires professionalism (based on Teachers Standards and Performance Management) from teachers and staff in the school and in return expects learners to understand the part they play in the process so that they can take responsibility for their own learning.

Key roles and responsibilities include:

- The Management Committee in defining and agreeing the principles underlying the school policy and in monitoring and reviewing its application. The role of the Management Committee is that of a 'critical friend'.
- The Local Authority is responsible for the final approval of all visits that are either overseas, residential, and/or involve an adventurous activity.
- The Executive Headteacher in framing the school policy and, with other members of the Senior Leadership Team, organising support for the implementation of the policy and the monitoring of the school environment;
- Teachers in observing the Teachers' Standards and ensuring they are fulfilling their professional roles and responsibilities and providing opportunities for learning outside of the classroom;
- All staff in ensuring they provide opportunities for learning outside of the classroom and ensuring the consistent application of the policy;
- 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 Executive Headteacher / SLT 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 is Malcolm Yale 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 approving them. The EVC sets up and manages the staff accounts on EVOLVE.
- Pupil **MUST ENSURE** they behave appropriately and respectfully and follow health and safety expectations when learning outside of the classroom.

Responsibilities on School Visits

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, employers are responsible for the health, safety and welfare of their employees, and anyone else on the premises or anyone who may be affected by their activities. This includes participants in offsite activities.

Under the Health and Safety at Work regulations 1992, employees must:

- assess the risks
- introduce measures to control those risks
- take reasonable care of their own and others health and safety
- co-operate with their employees over safety matters
- carry out activities in accordance with training and instructions
- inform the employer of any serious risks.

Responsibilities of the group leader

- responsible for the overall supervision and health and safety of the group
- obtain the Executive Headteacher's / SLT prior agreement before any off site visit takes place
- follow LEA and/or Management Committee regulations, guidelines and policies
- complete 'Evolve' on line
- appoint a deputy
- clearly define all tasks and roles
- be able to control and lead pupils of the relevant age range
- be suitably competent to instruct pupils in an activity and be familiar with the location.
- ensure all necessary medication is taken offsite
- ensure appropriate paperwork is electronically available to staff offsite be aware of child protection issues
- ensure adequate first aid provision will be available
- ensure a fully charged mobile phone is taken on the visit
- undertake and complete planning and preparation of the visit including briefing of group members
- undertake and complete comprehensive risk assessment
- ensure teachers and other supervisors are fully aware of what the proposed visit involves
- assess the pupil's suitability for the visit
- ensure the ratio of staff/pupils appropriate for the activity and needs of the group
- consider stopping if there is risk to health and safety of the pupils

Responsibilities of the pupils

The group leader must make it clear to the pupils that they must:

- not take unnecessary risks
- follow the instructions of the leader and other supervisors
- dress and behave sensibly and responsibly

Anyone whose behaviour is considered a danger to them or others may be stopped from going on the visit. The curriculum aims for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways wherever possible. Parents should be notified.

8. Emergency Procedures

- An EV7 and EV8 Form which details emergency procedures is taken on all trips

Teachers in charge of pupils during a visit have a duty of care to make sure that the pupils are safe and healthy. They also have a common law duty to act as a reasonably prudent parent would. Teachers should not hesitate to act in an emergency and to take lifesaving action in an extreme situation.

Emergency procedures are an essential part of planning a school visit. Staff should follow the LA guidance on emergency planning procedures.

If an accident happens, the priorities are:

- assess the situation
- safeguard the uninjured members of the group
- attend to the casualty
- inform the emergency services
- inform the Executive Headteacher / SLT

The Executive Headteacher / SLT will then inform the DCC Health & Safety Team

9. Parental Consent

The school obtains blanket consent at admission for regular/routine activities that take place wholly within the 'normal' school day. For visits that carry significant risk, parents/carers are fully informed of the arrangements, once the LA Health & Safety have authorised the activity, and acknowledgement received from parents/carers that they have received the information regarding the visit via a reply slip.

10. Risk Assessments

Record of Visits

All visits are recorded electronically through the Evolve System.

Risk assessments should be carried out by the group leader in accordance with Durham County Council's documentation

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

- what are the hazards?
- who might be affected by them?
- what safety measures need to be in place to reduce the risks to an acceptable level?
- can the group leader put the safety measures in place?
- what steps will be taken in an emergency?

The following factors should be taken into consideration:

- type of visit/ activity
- the location
- the competence, experience and qualifications of staff
- ratio of teachers/pupils
- group members age/ competence, fitness and temperament
- special educational or medical needs of the pupils
- quality and suitability of equipment
- seasonal conditions
- emergency procedures
- how to cope when a pupil becomes unable or unwilling to continue
- the need to monitor risks throughout the visit

First Aid

First Aid should form part of the risk assessment. The group leader should consider what level of first aid may be needed.

The group leader should have a good working knowledge of first aid and ensure that the first aid box is adequate for the activity. The minimum first aid provision should include

- a leaflet given general advice on first aid
- 6 individually wrapped sterile adhesive dressings

- 1 large sterile unmedicated wound dressing
- 2 triangular bandages
- safety pins
- individually wrapped moist cleansing wipes
- disposable gloves
- a resuscitator (for hygienic mouth to mouth resuscitation) would also be useful

All minibuses are required by law to carry a first aid kit.

Supervision

The factors to take into consideration include:

- sex, age and ability of group
- pupils with special educational needs or medical needs
- nature of activities
- experience of adults
- duration of journey
- competence and behaviour of pupils
- first aid cover

Transport

The Woodlands have named minibus driver's who check the vehicle before any trips. There will always be at least another member of staff accompanying the pupils on a trip. It is an expectation that following using the bus, the driver will ensure an inspection can be carried out by either Andy Curry or a member of SLT.

Use of staff cars to transport pupils

Staff who transport pupils have business insurance and ensure the vehicle is roadworthy and that pupils wear seatbelts. The Woodlands comply with LA guidance on this and ensure that two staff are always in cars.

Pupils using transport on a visit should be made aware of basic safety rules:

- arrive on time and wait for the transport in a safe place
- do not rush towards the transport when it arrives
- wear your seatbelt and stay seated whilst travelling on transport
- never tamper with any of the vehicle's equipment or driving controls

- bags must not block aisles or cause obstructions
- never attempt to get on or off the moving transport
- never lean out of or throw things from the windows
- never get off a vehicle held up in traffic
- never kneel or stand on seats
- never distract or disturb the driver or impede the driver's vision
- stay clear of the doors
- a member of staff must be seated at the side and rear door

FOR MORE DETAILS REFER TO "HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PUPILS ON SCHOOL VISITS"-
DFE

- All staff involved in a visit should be aware of the action to be taken in the event of an emergency
- It is vital that all staff understand the first aid and emergency procedures, not just the visit leader
- Particular consideration should be given to participants that have Special Educational Needs of medical conditions
- For all visits – A completed: Emergency Card – Group Leader (EV7) form must be with the group leader at all times
- Where the emergency contacts will not be at their workplace during a visit – A completed 'Emergency VCard – Emergency Contacts (EV8 Form)' must be with the Emergency Contact (s) at all times
- In an emergency group leaders must contact the Executive Headteacher / SLT

The following visits require approval via the DCC health & safety team via Evolve regardless of whether the group will be led by a school, service or another licensed activity provider.

- Abseiling (single pitch crags)
- Gorge scrambling
- Hill Walking & Mountaineering
- Improvised Rafting (sheltered inland waters)
- Kayaking (sheltered inland water and rivers up to Grade 2)
- Open canoeing (sheltered inland water and rivers up to Grade 2)
- Off-road cycling
- Rock Climbing (single pitch crags)

11. Monitoring and Evaluation

Policy and guidelines are subject to regular reviews and evaluation by the Senior Leadership Team.

The Senior Leadership Team will regularly review the work on Learning Outside the Classroom, via the school calendar, by observing lessons; completing learning walks; completing planning and work scrutinies; analysing visitor feedback; speaking to learners and analysing pupil and parent feedback. After any of these take place, an analysis will be made and feedback will be given to staff.

A review of lesson observations, planning scrutiny, work scrutiny and learning walks should inform the following:

- Improvement in learners' achievement and attainment
- Improvement in the Teaching and Learning across the provision

The desired outcomes for this policy are improvements in students learning and greater clarity amongst learners, teachers and parents concerning pupils' learning, achievement and progress.

The performance indicators will be:

- An improvement in learners' attitudes and attainment
- An improvement in behaviour across the school
- Improvement in the Teaching and Learning across the provision