

Live Life in All its Fullness, John 10:10



**Heartwood Church of England VC Primary and Nursery
School**

Educational Visits Policy

Agreed by the Governing Board: October 2026

Review Date: October 2027

1. Policy statement

Heartwood Church of England VC Primary and Nursery School has formally adopted, through its Governing Body, the Norfolk Guidance for Off-site Visits and follows the National Guidance published by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP). The school uses EVOLVE, Norfolk's online educational visits system, to plan, record and approve visits. Monitoring arrangements are agreed by the Governing Body to ensure that this policy and associated guidance are followed.

This policy applies to all learning activities that take place away from the school premises, including local walks, sporting fixtures, swimming, day visits, residential visits, adventurous activities and overseas visits.

2. Aims and purposes of educational visits

Heartwood has a strong commitment to the educational and personal value of learning beyond the classroom. We seek to provide a broad, balanced and inclusive range of opportunities that enrich the curriculum, support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, build confidence and independence, and enable pupils to experience their local community and the wider world.

Planning an inclusive and sustainable programme

Heartwood Church of England VC Primary and Nursery School is committed to providing all pupils with a rich range of learning experiences, both within and beyond the school site. When planning the annual programme, each year group will normally arrange no more than two off site educational visits in each academic year that require a financial contribution from parents or carers.

This approach is intended to reduce financial pressure on families; ensure that opportunities are inclusive and accessible to all pupils; manage the financial and staffing demands placed on the school; maintain the quality, educational value and safety of visits; and support a broad and balanced programme across each year group.

This does not prevent classes from undertaking appropriate local visits, sporting events, community activities or other opportunities that do not involve a cost to families, subject to the school's usual approval procedures.

Where appropriate, the school will enhance the curriculum by inviting visitors, organisations and specialists into school. These experiences can provide high-quality, inclusive opportunities for all pupils while reducing travel costs, staffing pressures and disruption to the school day. All proposed visits and visitors should have clearly identified curriculum or personal-development outcomes. Decisions will take account of educational value, inclusivity, affordability, staffing requirements, risk management and the needs of pupils and families. Activities may include:

- out-of-hours clubs and enrichment activities;
- school sports teams, competitions and festivals;
- regular local visits, including places of worship, swimming and local amenities;
- day visits linked to curriculum learning;
- residential visits;

- overseas visits; and
- adventurous activities

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing Body

The Governing Body approves this policy, monitors its implementation and ensures that appropriate arrangements are in place for the management of educational visits. It delegates operational approval in accordance with the procedures below.

Headteacher

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for ensuring that visits are properly planned, appropriately staffed and approved. Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Headteacher and EVC must approve the initial proposal. The completed plan and relevant risk-management documentation must also be approved before departure.

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The Headteacher has nominated a trained member of staff as the school's Educational Visits Coordinator. The appointment is approved by the Governing Body. The EVC supports and challenges Visit Leaders, checks that planning is proportionate and suitable, maintains oversight of staff competence and training, and ensures that visits are processed through EVOLVE in accordance with Norfolk guidance.

Visit Leader

The Visit Leader is responsible for the detailed planning, risk management, staffing, communication and safe delivery of the visit. The Visit Leader must be competent and appropriately experienced for the activity, follow this policy and Norfolk guidance, and submit documentation within the required timescales.

4. Approval procedures and visit categories

Heartwood uses EVOLVE as its planning and approval system. All off-site visits, including Local Area Visits, are recorded through EVOLVE unless the EVC has formally agreed another recording process that is consistent with current Norfolk guidance.

Level	Definition	Approval	Minimum submission time
Level 3	Overseas, residential or adventurous visits	School approval through EVOLVE and Local Authority online approval	At least 30 days before the visit; earlier where possible
Level 2	Day visits not included within the school's agreed Level 1 arrangements	EVC and Headteacher approval through EVOLVE	At least 14 days before the visit
Level 1	Local and regular visits covered by agreed standard operating procedures	Recorded and approved through the EVOLVE Local Area Visits module or	As early as practicable and before the visit takes place

	and generic risk assessments	other arrangement formally agreed by the EVC	
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The timescales above are minimum requirements. Visit Leaders should begin planning and seek initial approval substantially earlier for complex visits, visits requiring payment or contracts, and visits that need significant parental notice.

5. Staffing

The school recognises the key role of accompanying adults in ensuring high standards of learning, care and safety. Staffing decisions will be based on the needs of the group, the nature of the activity, the environment, staff competence and any individual medical, behavioural or additional needs. Ratios are determined through risk assessment rather than by a single fixed formula.

Staff are encouraged and supported to develop their competence in organising and managing visits. Less experienced colleagues should, where appropriate, work alongside experienced Visit Leaders. Staff selected for a visit must be suitably competent and briefed for their role. The school values the contribution of volunteers and parent helpers. Volunteers must be approved by the Headteacher and Visit Leader, appropriately checked in line with safeguarding requirements, and clearly briefed about their responsibilities and limitations. They must not be placed in sole charge of pupils unless this has been specifically considered and approved.

Staff and volunteers must not be under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs or any substance that could impair their judgement, ability to recognise hazards or response in an emergency.

6. Inclusion and individual needs

Educational visits will be planned to be as inclusive as reasonably possible. The school will consider reasonable adjustments, additional staffing, accessibility, medical needs, special educational needs and disabilities, behaviour and emotional needs at the earliest stage of planning. Decisions will be made through individual risk assessment and discussion with parents or carers and relevant professionals where appropriate. No pupil will be excluded solely because of a protected characteristic or additional need.

7. Risk management

Risk management is an integral part of good visit planning. The Visit Leader will identify significant hazards that are under the school's control, assess who may be harmed and how, and put proportionate precautions in place. Staff should focus on significant and foreseeable risks rather than attempting to record every everyday risk.

Planning must take account of travel, supervision, safeguarding, medical needs, behaviour, weather, venue arrangements, emergency procedures and any activity-specific hazards. Relevant standard operating procedures, generic risk assessments and provider documentation should be used where appropriate, with additional measures recorded for the particular group or visit.

Risk management is dynamic. Staff must continue to assess conditions during the visit and change or stop an activity if circumstances make this necessary.

8. External providers and contracts

Where an external provider organises all or part of a visit, any contract will be made with the school on behalf of the pupils and payments will be processed through the school's financial systems. The Visit Leader must undertake appropriate checks before the school makes a commitment.

Checks will include the provider's suitability, insurance, safeguarding arrangements, health and safety arrangements, licences or accreditation where relevant, and emergency procedures. Wherever possible, the school will use providers holding the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge. Where a provider does not hold the badge, the current Norfolk provider-assurance process must be followed.

9. Parental information and consent

Written consent is not normally required for visits that take place during school hours and form part of the school's normal curriculum, provided parents have been informed about the arrangements and the visit falls within the consent collected by the school. Parents must be told where their child will be, the purpose of the visit and any additional clothing, equipment, medication or arrangements required.

Specific written consent will be requested for residential visits, adventurous activities, overseas visits, activities outside normal school hours, and any visit for which a higher level of risk management or additional consent is appropriate. Parents will receive sufficient information to make an informed decision. For residential visits, the school will normally offer a briefing meeting or equivalent opportunity to ask questions.

10. Behaviour and expectations

The school's Behaviour and Relationship Policy and Heartwood values apply throughout educational visits. Pupils and parents will be informed of relevant expectations. Pupils must follow staff instructions and behave in a way that protects their own safety and the safety and wellbeing of others.

Where a pupil's behaviour creates a significant and unmanageable risk, the school may decide that the pupil cannot take part, must stop an activity or needs to return home. Such decisions will be based on individual risk assessment, inclusion duties and consultation with parents where practicable. Any arrangements and potential costs associated with an early return will be communicated to parents.

11. Emergency procedures and incident reporting

A member of the Senior Leadership Team or another suitably senior member of staff will be appointed as the school emergency contact for each visit. The contact must have access to

sufficient information to support the group and activate the school's critical incident arrangements if required.

The Visit Leader will ensure that full details of participants, accompanying adults, itinerary, provider and travel arrangements, emergency contacts and relevant medical information are available to the school emergency contact. Staff on the visit must carry the appropriate emergency contact details and follow the Norfolk and school emergency procedures. Serious incidents must be reported immediately to the school emergency contact, particularly those involving serious injury, safeguarding concerns, emergency services or potential media attention. All accidents, incidents and near misses must be reported and recorded in line with school and Local Authority procedures.

12. Local Authority advice, approval and monitoring

Heartwood is supported in its arrangements for educational visits by Norfolk County Council. The school will seek advice from Norfolk's Educational Visits Adviser or Outdoor Learning Adviser when necessary.

Visits involving an overnight stay, overseas travel or adventurous activities will be submitted through EVOLVE for Local Authority approval. The Local Authority may undertake sample monitoring of visits and planning. Heartwood will cooperate with such monitoring and will fully consider advice provided before a visit takes place.

13. Charging, remissions and financial arrangements

The school may invite parents to make voluntary contributions towards activities that take place mainly during school hours. There is no obligation to contribute, and pupils will not be treated differently according to whether their parents have made a contribution. Where insufficient voluntary contributions are received, the school may need to cancel or alter an activity if it cannot otherwise be funded.

In line with the school's commitment to inclusive and sustainable provision, each year group will normally plan no more than two visits per academic year that require a financial contribution from parents or carers. This limit does not apply to suitable no-cost local visits, community activities or other opportunities that do not create a financial burden for families.

The school will comply with the law and its Charging and Remissions Policy in relation to charges for activities outside school hours, board and lodging on residential visits, music tuition and other permitted costs. Support for disadvantaged pupils will be considered in line with school policy and the appropriate use of funding.

All income and expenditure relating to visits must be handled through the school's approved financial procedures. Staff must not enter into contracts or make financial commitments without the appropriate authority.

14. Monitoring and review

The EVC will monitor the quality and consistency of educational visit planning through EVOLVE checks, discussion with Visit Leaders, review of incidents and near misses, and evaluation of visits. The Headteacher and Governing Body will receive information sufficient to assure themselves that this policy is being implemented.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years, or sooner if Norfolk guidance, legislation or school arrangements change. Operational procedures may be updated between formal policy reviews to remain aligned with current Norfolk and OEAP guidance.

15. Related policies and guidance

- Norfolk Guidance for Off-site Visits and the Norfolk EVOLVE document library
- OEAP National Guidance
- Charging and Remissions Policy
- Behaviour and Relationships Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- First Aid Policy
- Critical Incident / Emergency Planning procedures
- Health and Safety Policy
- Finance Policy and insurance arrangements