

DOWNLANDS COMMUNITY SCHOOL



POLICY FOR OFF-SITE EDUCATIONAL VISITS

Downlands Community School is committed to offering a wide range of educational experiences to all pupils regardless of ability, need and cost. The school has been commended by previous OFSTED inspections for the number and variety of extra curricular activities and believes that pupils derive a good deal of educational benefit from taking part in visits with the school, both academically and socially. In particular, they have the opportunity to undergo experiences not available in the classroom and develop an informed and caring use of the environment. Visits help to develop a pupil's investigative skills and longer visits in particular encourage greater independence.

Downlands is also committed to ensuring the highest level of safety on educational visits. No amount of planning can guarantee that a visit will be totally incident free, but good planning and attention to safety measures will reduce the likelihood of accidents and lessen the seriousness of any that may occur.

The management of health and safety on visits is part of the school's overall policy on health and safety. This policy sets out the management arrangements for ensuring effective planning for safe school visits.

Downlands School practices will comply with relevant regulations, DfE and LA guidance and established good practice. In particular:

- The school will appoint a senior manager as an Educational Visits Co-Ordinator (EVC). The EVC will undertake appropriate training provided by the LA or similar body to ensure his/her competence.
- The EVC will notify staff of any important updates / information appearing on the EVOLVE website and direct staff to specific information relevant to their activity.
- The EVC will oversee the school's arrangements for planning and approving all off-site activities.
- The initial check of EVOLVE forms submitted by trip leaders will be carried out by the EVC and any issues addressed / forms returned for upgrades. If forms are correctly completed the EVC will authorise them for scrutiny by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then authorise the EVOLVE form and this will submit the trip details to LA for final authorisation.
- All residential visits will be approved by the governing body, usually at the first meeting of the school year. In exceptional circumstances, where a governing body meeting cannot be held in time, the Headteacher will consult with the Chair of Governors and, if possible, with the Pastoral Committee.
This should be sought before non-returnable deposits are paid.
- There will be pre-visits for all new proposed activities wherever possible.
- Group leaders will be suitably competent and experienced in supervising the age group going on the visit. Non-teacher supervisors will have been appropriately vetted, and on residential visits subject to List 99/CRB/ISA checks.
- Trip leaders should check that external providers are listed upon the County EVOLVE system and have appropriate insurance as stipulated in County documentation. If the external provider is new to the County register then additional checks / confirmation should be sought from the Provider such that they can subsequently be added to the County Register.
- Timescale for submitting forms :-
Trips involving non-hazardous activities or hazardous activities involving Providers already checked by County = **minimum of one month in advance**
Trips involving activities using Providers **not** already checked by County = **two months in advance**. In these cases staff should ensure that the new providers are approached with a view to completing necessary paperwork and checks well in advance. If unsure - ask EVC or Sophie Fairbank.
- Should there be a situation whereby inclusion for an individual on a particular trip (which is part of a curriculum course) is threatened because of genuine financial hardship, the school will attempt to find the means to facilitate the individual's participation.

Evolve Procedure

Having received appropriate permission for the trip to proceed,

- Trip leader to complete all sections of the online EVOLVE form at least 6 weeks prior to the date of the trip where possible in order to allow checking and final submission to County to meet their mandatory 4 weeks notification stipulation.
- EVC will check EVOLVE submission details and liaise with trip leader as required to ensure full completion, adequate detail and all required information is correct.
- Once satisfied all is correct, the EVC submits the form online for the approval of the Headteacher and includes any notes which may be pertinent.
- The Headteacher will read the form and, if satisfied all is correct, authorise and submit it to County for final formal checking and approval.
- If all is in order, County will return the approved form with any appropriate notes for consideration. The form is kept on the schools EVOLVE database. Email notes confirming the progress of the form at each stage are sent automatically to the Headteacher, the EVC and the trip leader.
- The system allows for registers of attendees, accompanying staff, copies of letters sent to parents and post trip evaluation to be stored.
- Trip leaders should ensure that they upload copies of information to parents, behavioural contracts, kitlists etc and complete simple feedback evaluation afterwards.

All off-site activities will have:

- Clear objectives
- Clear address/details of venue including contact phone number.
- Adequate child protection procedures in place, relative to the activity as specified by the LA.
- Adequate risk assessment and appropriate safety measures in place.
Risk Assessments updated to include new information / developments.
- Appropriate adult/pupil ratio.
- Had liaison with parents and consent obtained.
- An emergency contact from a member of Senior Management who will have full details of the group and parent's contact.
- An emergency response plan.
- List of attendees lodged with pupils services and reception
- On return, recording of incidents and accidents to enable staff to learn from previous experience, recording of successful practice and potential problems.
- On return trip leaders should be given the opportunity to brief Senior staff as to the success / problems encountered during the trip.

The group leader will ensure the following for each visit:

- The visit is directly related to the school's established curriculum if the activity is to take place in term time.
- Any activities are carried out by a person appropriately qualified and of physical fitness for the activities to be undertaken. They must be fully conversant with the responsibilities of their role.
- There is a clear purpose.
- All staff are aware of standards of behaviour expected of students.
- Be suitable for the pupils concerned – having regard to their ages, abilities and aptitudes.
- Compile a comprehensive risk assessment to include the needs of the group and the purpose of the visit. This document should be updated for each subsequent trip.
- All staff involved recognise they have a "duty of care" and often are acting "in loco parentis".
- There will be appropriate provision of First Aid and adequate insurance cover for the proposed activities – as specified in LA guidelines.
- Plans must be sent to the LA for approval if the activity is hazardous, residential or overseas.
- In the case of residential visits, there will be an advance meeting for parents to discuss the visit.
- Written permission for the trip has been obtained using appropriate school paperwork.

- Evolve trip form has been completed and submitted to EVC/Head on line six weeks to one month prior to the trip.
- That they are familiar with the school Emergency Response Plan.
- That they take the LA Emergency tel. no. (01243-792792) with them.
- All students are aware of standards of behaviour expected.
- The trip leader must ensure that they scan and upload colour copies of their relevant activity qualifications into the AFL section of EVOLVE. This should also include First Aid qualification and Minibus permit if applicable.
- The trip leader should be encouraged to complete the review section of EVOLVE in order to provide a written record of the trip.
- The trip leader will supply the Headteacher's PA with a copy of the letter to parents which should include details allowing them to use the online payment system in order to pay for their child's trip. This will then be placed online for their usage. All return forms will be sent to the "Trips Box" at Reception for processing. Trip leaders will be regularly updated as to those who have completed consent and payment details for the trip.

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