Outdoor Education and Off-site Educational Visits - School Policy

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1.2	22/1/24	RM	Addition - naming of a second Visit Leader	
1.3	22.1.24	RM	Addition - staff with family member of the trip	
1.4	27.11.25	PW	Amend wording – principal to head teacher	

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1. Introduction

1.1 This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Governing Body and Head teacher 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 2024" (OEVOSA) Link to policy as the basis for the school's policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.

1.2 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 St James.

1.3 This policy also complements and should be read in conjunction with the school's Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

2. Responsibilities of the Head teacher

2.1 The Head teacher will:

- meet with the visit leader to discuss all aspects of the planning timeline
- ensure that all aspects of the planning process meet the agreed timeframes
- ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
- have overall responsibility for the approval of all 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 Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy and DMAT Staff Code of Conduct
- ensure that they are suitably trained, experienced and competent to undertake the role of 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 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 visits and off-site activities
- ensure that for all off-site visits and activities risks have been assessed, the significant findings of these assessments recorded, and any appropriate safety measures implemented accordingly
- to be the contact with the LA over planned visits

3. Responsibilities of the Head teacher as the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

3.1 In addition to holding the ultimate responsibility, the Head teacher of St James has specified tasks as the experienced and competent EVC.

3.2 The Head teacher as EVC is responsible for carrying out the following agreed tasks and attending the relevant training and update training provided by the Local Authority (LA).

3.3 The functions of the Head teacher as EVC are:

- 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/carers 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 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 Leader

4.1 The Visit Leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity. A second Visit Leader will be named to deputise for the Visit Leader should unforeseen events occur.

- 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, young people and members of the public presented by the visit or activity in order to identify and implement any safety measures.
- 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

4.2 Where a staff member has their own children on the trip, they should not be the named Visit Leader. This is to ensure that decisions are made in the interests of all children; particularly, in an emergency.

5. Responsibilities of additional members of staff taking part in visits and off-site activities

5.1 Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the Visit Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of others including young people on the visit
- Take time to understand their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

6. Responsibilities of pupils

6.1 Whilst taking part in 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. Young people should:

- Avoid unnecessary risks
- Follow instructions of the party 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/carers

7.1 Parents/carers have an important role in deciding whether any 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 party 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. Risk assessment

8.1 The 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 are 'routine and regular' in that they occur repeatedly each academic year, the measures taken to control these risks are listed in the school specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) documents.

8.2 These are the control measures that will apply to all such visits and off-site activities and have been drawn up by the Head teacher/EVC and will be brought to the attention of anyone undertaking the role of Visit Leader.

8.3 In assessing the risks presented by a planned visit or activity, the Visit Leader must judge if the SOP are adequate for controlling the risks. For each visit/activity, the SOP document will be generated electronically and the Visit Leader will *either* confirm these as adequate for the proposed visit/activity *or* the additional control measures needed will be listed in the enhanced risk assessment column.

8.4 Any activities delivered by school staff falling within the definition of Category B (adventurous), will have a separate stand-alone risk assessment; Adventurous Activities Led by School Staff Risk Assessment.

8.5 This process will be undertaken by the Visit 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 the risk assessment format on Evolve.

9. Approval of off-site activities

9.1 The Head teacher/EVC will be responsible for approving all off-site activities subject to assurances that arrangements are in line with this policy and risks are adequately controlled. This includes approving the Visit Leader for each visit or off-site activity.

9.2 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 etc.

Category C:

- Visits of all types outside the UK

9.3 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 Head teacher/EVC *one month* ahead of submission for final endorsement by the Local Authority Adviser for Outdoor Education. Quality Assurance processes to monitor the management of offsite visits will be undertaken by the Hub Head teacher

9.4 The policy of *St James* is that Category A visits will be uploaded to the Evolve system for approval, and to allow the Head teacher and the EVC to monitor the management of off-site visits.

10. Safeguarding

10.1 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 this before the trip or activity takes place.

10.2 Arrangements must be in place to enable contact with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) 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.

10.3 Where the DSL is a member of the visit party, arrangements must be in place to enable contact with a senior staff member/DDSL 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 DSL.

11. The provision of training and information

11.1 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 off-site visits and activities and to any parent/carer requesting a copy. Access will also be made available to the overarching OEVOSA policy, and additional guidance information, via the Evolve system.

11.2 The Head teacher will ensure that staff leading or participating in 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 Head teacher and records of qualifications will be uploaded to the Evolve system.

11.3 The Director of School Improvement (primary) will undertake audits of qualifications and training as part of DMAT quality assurance processes

12. Action in case of emergency

12.1 The Head teacher/EVC will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place before approving visits. The Visit Leader will identify these arrangements via a process of risk assessment. Where necessary, this assessment must include the identification of contingency plans.

12.2 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.

12.3 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.

13. Monitoring and Review

13.1 The Director of School Improvement (primary) will monitor the application of this policy in operational practice by:

- Quality assuring a sample of each category of visits termly:
  - Learning objectives for visits
  - Risk assessments,
  - Forms on Evolve,
  - Parental communication
  - Qualifications/records of leaders
  - Training
  - Visit evaluations

13.2 The Director of School Improvement (primary) 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

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14. Submission of visit form timescales

Visit forms must be submitted by the Visit Leader to the EVC/Head teacher in accordance with the following timescales. Failure to meet these timescales may result in the planned visit being postponed or cancelled.

Category A Day Visits – At least two weeks before the date of the visit

Category A Residentials – At least two months before the date of the residential

Category B Adventurous Day visits – At least one month before the date of the visit and submit to the LA two weeks before the visit date

Category B Adventurous Residential visits – At least three months before the date of the residential and submit to the LA two months before the visit date

Category C Overseas visits – At least four months before the date of the residential and submit to the LA three months before the visit date

Signature – Director of School Improvement (primary): _____

Date: _____

Signature – Head teacher: _____

Date: _____