

St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation

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ADOPTED DECEMBER 2024

REVIEW DECEMBER 2025

# **Educational Visits and Offsite Activities Policy**

This Policy must be read in conjunction with [\*\*ESCC  
Schools' Offsite Visits Procedures 2024\*\*](#)

*In our Church of England Federation, we take strength in collaboration, yet celebrate uniqueness. As schools, we may be small, but together we encourage children to be the best they can be so they are ready to make their mark on the world. We welcome the child yet embrace the whole family. We celebrate our rural environment yet aspire to look beyond our boundaries. We strive for knowledge and gratefully accept opportunities that come our way to enable us to live life in all its fullness. We all take a pride in our Federation as we follow in Jesus' example.*

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## **Aim**

This Policy has been adapted by St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation (which is referred to as the Federation in the rest of this document) to reflect the Federation's procedures and processes for planning and approving offsite trips and educational visits.

This policy has been written from the latest guidance available to the Federation. Our Headteachers are able to refer to East Sussex County Council (ESCC) Schools' Offsite Visits Procedures 2024 written by Leanne Bentley, which can be located on ESCC Online Information platform and the National Guidance, produced by the Offsite Education Advisors Panel (OEAP), which has been adopted by ESCC.

## **Introduction**

This policy applies to most situations where adults acting in the course of their employment take responsibility for children and young people taking part in offsite activities and visits, as well as when taking part in on-site outdoor activities.

Our Federation schools provide a number of offsite activities and educational visit opportunities for all young people within their schools. These include visits to local historical places, woodlands and nature parks, art galleries, the Houses of Parliament and residential visits to PGL.

The benefits of learning outside the classroom are fully understood by the Federation and each visit will set out a clear purpose and learning objectives, which will be reviewed at the end of each visit to see if they have been achieved.

The safety of pupils and members of staff on offsite visits is paramount and the Federation, will follow the requirements and guidance from ESCC Schools' Offsite Visits Procedures 2024 and also refer to National Guidance produced by the Offsite Education Advisors Panel.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer (the Federation).

Employers have duties to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- the health, safety and welfare of all employees and volunteers
- the health and safety for all young people for whom the Director of Children's Services is responsible under the Children Act 2004.

The Federation needs to ensure that roles and responsibilities are clearly set out. The named Governors who takes responsibility for Offsite Activities and Educational Visits are Mrs S Cottingham and Mrs Z Holland. The Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) for the Federation is Graham Sullivan who has received training to ensure they can fulfil their role.

Below is a set of roles and responsibilities which the designated individual needs to ensure are fulfilled.

Role	Responsibilities
Governors (3.4f)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of who the employer is.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a policy in place for offsite activities and educational visits.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a trained EVC in place for the establishment.</li> <li>• Ensure there are training opportunities provided.</li> <li>• Ensure the establishment has a visit approval procedure in place and follows ESCC policy for approving visits.</li> <li>• Ensure there is a monitoring system in place.</li> <li>• Ensure visits support the principles of inclusion.</li> <li>• Can have a read only access on Exeant to have an overview of all the offsite visits taking place out of county and out of the country.</li> </ul>
Headteacher (3.4g)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offsite activities comply with ESCC policy and National Guidance produced by the OEAP.</li> <li>• Visits receive appropriate approval before they take place.</li> <li>• Ascertained that all staff involved in offsite visits are competent to carry out their role.</li> <li>• That there is a designated EVC that meets employer requirements and has undertaken training.</li> <li>• Suitable child protection procedures are in place, including vetting at an appropriate level of all voluntary helpers.</li> <li>• You are assured that the EVC, Visit Leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers are appropriately trained and competent to carry out such tasks as they are allocated.</li> <li>• Ensure visits support the principles of inclusion.</li> </ul>
Educational Visits Co-ordinator (3.4j)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should have experience of leading visits, or qualifications or leadership experience. They should be an experienced visits leader.</li> <li>• Should have received EVC training.</li> <li>• Supports staff to ensure visits are planned and prepared appropriately following ESCC Offsite Activities Procedures.</li> <li>• Ensures staff have access to training to support their role in Offsite Activities and Educational Visits.</li> <li>• Approve visits that comply with establishments and ESCC policy.</li> <li>• Check that all visits have an emergency contact and the emergency contact is an appropriate person.</li> <li>• Ensure staff evaluate visits that have taken place and report accidents and near misses appropriately.</li> </ul>
Visit Leader (3.4k)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must have experience of leading offsite visits.</li> <li>• Must be inducted by the establishment and have knowledge of the establishment's and ESCC Procedures for Offsite Visits and Crisis Management.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be approved as competent by the establishment.</li> <li>• Liaise with the EVC.</li> <li>• Plan and prepare for the visit, including the risk assessment, ensure it is in line with ESCC policy and the establishment policy.</li> <li>• Define the roles and responsibilities for other staff on the visit.</li> <li>• Evaluate the visit and report and record any accidents and near misses.</li> </ul>
Assistant Visit Leader (3.4I)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be specifically competent and knowledgeable about establishment and employer policies/procedures, in so far as they affect the responsibilities that have been assigned.</li> <li>• Ensure that you have been sufficiently involved in the planning and preparation for the activity/visit, including contributing to the organisation of risk management.</li> <li>• Ensure that you understand the role and responsibilities that you have been assigned and how these integrate with other staff and especially that of the activity/visit leader.</li> <li>• Contribute to the visit evaluation, and reporting and recording of accidents and near misses.</li> </ul>

### **Using the ESCC Offsite Approval Service**

Using this service means we will record all overseas, residential and visits involving adventure activities and, or demanding environments including those close to open water through **Exeant**. Visits must be submitted for formal approval from the OES **four weeks in advance** of a visit. If the nature of the visit is more complex due to the environment or activity (such as overseas treks) these should be discussed as soon as reasonably practicable. Formal approval means that the EVC and the Headteacher will have already checked and approved the visit.

It is required that all visits outside of Sussex are recorded on the system for notification purposes, prior to the departure date.

Local day visits do not require ESCC approval however it is strongly recommended that all visits are submitted on the system or that the school implements its own robust system for visits that fall outside the ESCC remit and specify these procedures in this document.

### **Visits not submitted on Exeant**

Routine offsite visits or those that are deemed unadventurous and within the county of Sussex or those which are straight forward and are covered by blanket consent, or do not require consent, can be covered by a generic risk assessment and should be written into the school's visits policy. This could include, PE fixtures, weekly swimming lessons or Forest Schools.

## **Risk Management**

As an employer, ESCC has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed and reduced to an acceptable level. This requires proportional risk management systems to be in place. Training, support and resources are provided to help implement this. The risk assessment template is under 'documents' on Exeant. ESCC require ESCC maintained schools to use the ESCC template.

The Visit Leader must complete sign and date the risk assessment. These signatures can be electronic. The EVC (and when required the Headteacher) should check the risk assessment as part of the approval process. If the risk assessment is for a visit that is not submitted on Exeant, the EVC (and in some cases the Headteacher) should check and sign the risk assessment.

An important aspect of a risk awareness approach is to consider the benefits to be gained from participating in a particular activity and weigh them against the risks. This would mean any residual risk (i.e. risk remaining after control measures) is 'acceptable'. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) endorses this approach. It also acknowledges the importance of young people being educated in risk management and taking responsibility for the outcomes of their own actions.

- [HSE five steps to risk assessment](#)
- [ESCC risk assessment template](#)

Please refer to [OEAP National Guidance](#).

## **Effective supervision**

There are no legally set ratios (accept for Early Years) to abide by in respect of staff to pupil ratios for offsite visits. It is a legal requirement that there is effective supervision, when considering the level of supervision required for a visit you should consider:

- **Staff:** abilities, experience, qualifications, rapport with children. The consequences of a staff member being indisposed.
- **Timing:** duration of the visit, time of year impact, in or out of normal hours.
- **Activities:** prior experience, who is leading the activities.
- **Group:** abilities, behaviour, maturity, specific individual needs.
- **Environment:** in or outside, public spaces, urban, rural.
- **Remoteness:** distance from the school, impact on travel, communication and support in an emergency.

## **Ratios**

It is important to remember that an effective ratio for one group may not be effective for another group completing the same visit. A ratio should be determined by using the process of risk assessment.

## **Early Years**

Refer to page 28 and 29 of the [Early Years framework](#) which sets the legal ratios for onsite, therefore offsite visits would require a higher ratio. If providing a residential experience, one staff member must be awake.

ESCC requires all visits to have **one** identified Visit Leader and an identified Assistant Leader. Both should meet the requirements specified by the OEAP National Guidance and your establishment for these roles. Only in exceptional circumstances, whereby the risk assessment deems it appropriate, can a visit take place with one member of staff. In these circumstances there should be a clear procedure in place for communicating the group are going offsite, when they are due to return and, for support when it is needed. Refer to the school lone working policy.

Refer to [OEAP National Guidance](#).

## **Inclusion: Discrimination**

The Equality Act 2010 states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil to whom one of the protected characteristics applies in the way that it affords (or not) the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service.

These include disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Every effort must therefore be made to ensure that offsite activities and educational visits are available and accessible to all. Reasonable efforts must be made to find a venue and activities that are suitable and accessible for the whole group to participate in fully. The principles of inclusion should be clearly reflected in the establishment's policy.

Visit Leaders should consider the needs of the group at the earliest point when planning a visit, so they can ensure the needs of the young people are met. In some circumstances it may be impossible for reasonable adjustments to be made to enable someone to be included on a visit. In this case it is not necessary to deprive the rest of the group. However, you must demonstrate that what happened was for a reason other than unfair discrimination. The reasonable adjustments template can help record and identify feasible adjustments. Please contact the OES via [outdoor.education@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:outdoor.education@eastsussex.gov.uk) if you have any queries relating to inclusion.

## **Exclusion for behaviour**

Behaviour is not a protective characteristic defined by the Equality Act. It may therefore be acceptable to exclude someone from an activity or visit if their potential behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety or welfare of either themselves or others. Also, if it affects the successful completion of the activity or visit. However, if the behaviour is associated with a protected characteristic, great care should be taken to ensure that unfair or illegal discrimination does not take place.

If the expectation is that parents will be responsible for collecting a child from a visit due to unmanageable or unsafe behavior, this should be set out and clearly communicated to the parents in the school expectations for exemplary conduct on school trips. The school should consider the implications if parents or carers cannot drive or if there are any costs involved in a pupil returning early.

Refer to [OEAP National Guidance](#).

[Reasonable Adjustments Template](#)

[Emotional wellbeing and mental health guidance document](#)

### **Charging for Visits**

There is a legal framework relating to charging for visits, voluntary contributions and remissions that Headteachers or managers, EVCs and Visit Leaders must take into account. These are set out in the Education Act 1996 sections 449-462.

Refer to, [Charging for school activities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **Insurance: School journey insurance**

ESCC maintained schools will automatically be covered by the ESCC school journey insurance arrangements. However, any schools that have opted out of our corporate arrangements will no longer have cover and will need to ensure they have alternative insurance in place.

Maintained schools are required to take a copy of the Insurance certificate with them on all overseas visits. Group leaders should familiarise themselves with this document which summarises the scope and conditions of cover, in particular noting the advice on pre-existing medical conditions. In addition, please note that certain policy exclusions apply and contact must be made with the insurer's emergency assistance number immediately. This is in the event of losses that lead to in-patient hospital treatment abroad and emergency repatriation expenses, otherwise insurers have the right to refuse a claim.

### **Public liability insurance**

When a service provider is coming into a school the provider must have £10 million public liability cover. This can be achieved by the provider holding £10 million level of insurance outright or by the provider taking £5 million and then topping up with a further £5 million through ESCC contractors top up insurance. Anyone with less than £5 million of their own insurance cannot provide services within schools.

The requirement for £10 million public liability also exists for offsite visits. This means any venue, provider including tour operators, travel agents or accommodation should have £10 million public liability insurance.



Offsite visits to public services and places (e.g. cinemas, museums) where the risk assessment perceives the risk to be low may have lower public liability insurance which would still be acceptable.

In some circumstances where the provider is not offering a residential visit, the public liability insurance may be topped up by the ESCC contractors top up scheme if they hold a minimum of £5 million public liability insurance already. This is only available if the provider is entering into a bespoke contract purely with your school.

Non ESCC schools are not able to access the ESCC top up scheme, however they are not limited to using providers holding £10 million public liability insurance however this is recommended. It is advisable that providers do not have any less than £5 million public liability insurance.

## **Federation Specific Requirements**

### **Parents/Carers Driving Pupils on behalf of a Federation School**

In order to minimise the cost for Federation school visits, parents may offer the use of their car when assisting with school activities. This could be for an educational visit or a sports fixture. There is a need for the Federation to make a distinction between informal arrangements, solely organised by the parents without any involvement from their school and formal arrangements whereby the Federation school is involved in the organisation. For formal arrangements and the requirements please see Appendix One and Two.

### **Members of Staff Using their Private Vehicle**

In addition to parents/carers using their own vehicle members of staff may use their own vehicle to transport pupils to both educational visits and sporting events. Please see Appendix Three for the Private Car Use Procedure.

## **Review**

This policy will be reviewed as it is deemed appropriate, but no less frequently than annually. The policy review will be undertaken by the Federation's Headteachers and the designated Governor.

## Appendix One

### Parents/Carers Driving Pupils on behalf of a Federation School

#### Process for Formal Arrangements

1. The Federation school has seen the insurance certificate for the vehicle.  
*Please note the parent should check that their insurance cover allows for these activities as some may regard this as official business and require business insurance. – Fully comprehensive insurance is recommended.*
2. The vehicle has a valid MOT and Vehicle Excise Licence.
3. The driver views their own licence online and generates a sharing code so the Federation school can check convictions (see Appendix Three). A driver should not be allowed to transport children if they have convictions for serious offences e.g. drink/drug driving, dangerous driving or have 6 or more points on their licence.
4. If the activity is deemed a Regulated Activity with a frequency of 1 or more times in a week, or 4 or more days in a 30 day period, then a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be required.
5. The driver is 21 or over and has 3 years driving experience.

#### **Please Ensure:**

- Parents are informed of the arrangements and explicit parental consent given.
- Seatbelts/correct child restraints are worn by all the child passengers.
- The vehicle should not carry more passengers than there are seats with working seatbelts and in any event not carry more than 8 passengers.
- Unless due to an emergency situation, or where there is a specific job requirement, a member of staff or volunteer should not be in a position where they are alone with young people. A signed statement from every parent using their own vehicle for school activities should be obtained (Please see Appendix Two).
- Careful consideration is given to the behaviour and needs of the group travelling in cars as the driver cannot supervise the child whilst driving.

**Important note:** This section should be used in conjunction with the child protection procedures. Some parents may not want their child(ren) to travel with other parents, or particular parents. They should have the opportunity to make their views known. It is recommended that any parent who has contact with the group of children at a Federation school or on a school trip (non-residential) for a single occasion are issued with guidance about appropriate contact with children.

If it is a Regulated Activity i.e. every week for 6 weeks then a DBS check would be required. Regardless of whether a DBS check is carried out it is recommended that:

- All parents and volunteers are issued with guidance about appropriate contact with children.
- The departure and collection point is the school for those visits taking place during the school day.
- The vehicles travel in convoy.

## Checklist for the Use of Parents/Carers Own Vehicle

The following checklist has been developed to assist our schools.

**Drivers Name:** ..... **Registration Number:** .....

Destination: .....

Date of Event: .....

Please circle Yes/No:

Insurance certificate is valid and has been seen. Yes/No

The driving licence has been checked and seen. Yes/No

The vehicle has a current MOT and VEL. Yes/No

DBS Certificate is in place if required Yes/No

Driver is 21 or older and has 3 years driving experience. Yes/No

Parents have been informed of the use of parents/carers vehicles for this offsite activity. Yes/No

The vehicle cannot carry more than eight passengers. Yes/No

Driving license check via sharing code Yes/No

A signed statement from parents/carers using their cars for school activities. Yes/No

Checklist Completed by: .....

Date: .....

All parents and volunteers are issued with guidance about appropriate contact with children.

*In order to reduce the level of checks to be carried out, at the beginning of the school year for parents who assist regularly in the transportation of pupils on off-site visits during the school year this checklist can be completed annually along with a DBS check.*

**Appendix Two**

*Template Letter for Parents/Carers using their own vehicles to transport pupils on school activities i.e. educational visits/sporting events.*

*Dear Headteacher*

*I confirm that I do have a motor vehicle insurance policy for the vehicle in which I intend to drive.*

*Name of Insurance Company:.....*

*Policy Number:.....*

*I understand that I am not indemnified by St Thomas à Becket Church of England Federation in the use of my vehicle.*

*I have checked with my insurance company and confirm that the activity is covered by them.*

*I can confirm that my vehicle has a current MOT and Vehicle Excise Licence (Tax Disc) and that the vehicle is in good condition.*

*Signed.....*

*Dated.....*

## **Appendix Three**

### **Members of Staff Using their Private Vehicle**

In some situations the Headteacher/Teacher may use their own vehicle in order to transport young people.

#### **Process for Members of Staff to Use their Own Vehicle**

1. The Federation Headteacher has agreed this as part of their overall policy
2. They have business insurance – fully comprehensive is recommended.
3. The insurance certificate should be checked by the relevant Federation Headteacher and a copy retained and signed, this should be checked annually, or an auditable record kept.
4. The Employee enables their Headteacher to check their driving licence online via a sharing Code (see below). This would need to be checked annually. A signed copy of the driving licence should be retained on file. Any convictions for dangerous driving, drink/drug driving or the driver has 6 or more points on their licence, they should not be allowed to transport young people.

#### **Please Ensure:**

- No money for reward or hire is paid, only payment for running costs.
- Parents have been informed of the arrangements.
- Seatbelts or correct child restraints must be worn by all children.
- The vehicle cannot carry more than 8 passengers.

Careful consideration is given to the behaviour and needs of the group travelling in cars as the driver cannot supervise the child whilst driving.

Except in the most urgent cases which would include the consent from the parents of the child and the Headteacher, staff should not be in a car with only 1 child. In the urgent cases where this has been granted, the Headteacher must inform the Chair of Governors if this has occurred.

#### **NOTE: Insurance of Private Motor Vehicles for Federation Business**

Before employees are allowed to use their private vehicles on Federation business, they must sign the Claimant Authorisation Document, Trav 10, to confirm their vehicle is insured for business use, including travelling to attend training courses. This is subsequently confirmed on each Business Mileage and Expenses Claim Form, Trav2, where the claimant signs a declaration confirming their motor insurance cover.

#### **How to check a Driving Licence Online**

1. Drivers view their own licence on-line by entering their driving licence number, national insurance number, and post code here:

<https://www.gov.uk/view-driving-licence>

**Drivers can generate a ‘sharing code\*’ (valid for 72 hours).**

2. Employers use the sharing code and the last 8 characters of the driving licence number, to view basic licence information (licence categories, endorsements) here:

<https://www.gov.uk/check-driving-information>

## Appendix Four

### Risk Assessment Template to be used for Visits Submitted on Exeant

Section of Visit	Significant Hazards with Potential to cause harm	Control Measures	Likelihood	Severity	Risk Rating
Sites/Environment/Places Being Visit					
Activity Arrangements					
Transport					
The Group					
Persons at risk					

#### NOTE THE FOLLOWING

Ongoing risk assessment – the most essential element: *1. Apply the control measures 2. Monitor how effective they are 3. Change, adapt, and revise as required.*

Perseverance, Fellowship, Courage, Respect, Understanding, Thankfulness



Alternative Plan
Enter an alternative plan/activities that may take place

Emergency Contact Information and Procedure
Write your establishment emergency contact information and procedure.

LIKELIHOOD/ SEVERITY	Minor Injury (1)	Injury/Ill Health (2)	Over 3 Day Absence (3)	Major Injury (4)	Disability or Death (5)
Very Unlikely (1)	1 LOW	2 LOW	3 LOW	4 LOW	5 LOW
Unlikely (2)	2 LOW	4 LOW	6 LOW	8 LOW	10 MEDIUM
Likely (3)	3 LOW	6 LOW	9 MEDIUM	12 MEDIUM	15 MEDIUM
Very Likely (4)	4 LOW	8 LOW	12 MEDIUM	16 HIGH	20 HIGH
Almost Certain (5)	5 LOW	10 MEDIUM	15 MEDIUM	20 HIGH	25 HIGH

Risk Rating	
Low 1-8	Probability for minor accidents; non disruptive damage to equipment or property. Requiring long term action by management.
Medium 9-15	Probability for lost time; accident and damage to equipment or property. Requiring immediate action by management.
High 16-25	Probability for loss of life, serious injury; damage to equipment or property. Requiring immediate action by management.



The risk matrix identifies the likelihood from unlikely to almost certain and the severity low – extreme, use this to risk rate each hazard.

Visit Leader Signature	Insert visit leader signature
Date	

