



Educational Visits Guidance

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1. Introduction

At Vermont School, we believe that learning extends beyond the classroom and that educational visits play a vital role in enriching the curriculum, broadening horizons, and building pupils' social, emotional, and life skills. For our children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, carefully planned visits provide valuable opportunities to practise regulation strategies, develop independence, strengthen relationships, and experience success in new environments.

All educational visits are planned with the same high level of care and safeguarding as classroom learning. Staff ensure that activities are inclusive, purposeful, and linked to the curriculum, while also supporting pupils' individual needs through the use of Regulation Support Plans (RSPs), Thrive-informed approaches, and high levels of supervision.

To ensure that visits are safe and well-organised, the EVOLVE system is used to plan, risk-assess, and approve all off-site activities. EVOLVE provides a clear framework for staff to record arrangements, identify risks, and outline strategies to support our pupils, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements and Local Authority guidance.

2. Use of EVOLVE

The EVOLVE online system is used to manage and record all educational visits. EVOLVE provides a consistent framework for staff to plan, risk assess, and gain approval for activities beyond the classroom, ensuring compliance with Local Authority requirements and national guidance.

Responsibilities within EVOLVE:

- **Visit Leader** – completes the EVOLVE form for each visit, including the purpose of the trip, staffing arrangements, supervision ratios, transport details, venue information, and a full risk assessment that considers both general and individual pupil needs.
- **Class Team** – contributes to the planning process by identifying individual risks and regulation strategies to be included in pupils' Regulation Support Plans (RSPs).
- **Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)** – reviews all submissions, checks that risk assessments are robust, ensures that safeguarding and SEMH considerations are fully addressed, and provides guidance to staff.

- **Headteacher (or delegated senior leader)** – gives final approval for all visits through the EVOLVE system, ensuring that trips meet the school's safeguarding and health and safety expectations.
- **Local Authority** – for higher-risk activities (e.g., residentials, adventurous activities), EVOLVE automatically routes the submission to the Local Authority for approval, and governors are informed as part of their monitoring role.

Benefits of EVOLVE at Vermont School:

- Ensures that all visits are planned and approved consistently.
- Provides a clear audit trail for safeguarding, health and safety, and Ofsted inspections.
- Embeds consideration of SEMH needs and individual pupil support into the planning process.
- Promotes staff accountability and confidence in leading safe, inclusive visits.

3. Risk Assessment and Pupil Needs

We recognise that our pupils may face additional challenges when participating in visits, particularly around emotional regulation, transitions, sensory processing, and social interaction. To ensure that every visit is safe, inclusive, and supportive, risk assessments are central to our planning and are always recorded and approved through the EVOLVE system.

Risk Assessment Process

Each visit includes a general risk assessment (e.g., travel, venue, environmental factors) and individual risk considerations for pupils where necessary.

Individual risks may include:

- Emotional dysregulation – strategies outlined in the pupil's Regulation Support Plan (RSP).
- Sensory sensitivities – identification of quiet spaces, sensory tools, or planned breaks.
- Potential for absconding – clear staffing arrangements, increased ratios, and safe boundaries.
- Medical needs – medication, first aid requirements, or health care plans.
- Behavioural triggers – proactive strategies to reduce likelihood of escalation, and agreed de-escalation techniques.

All risk assessments are uploaded to EVOLVE, checked by the EVC, and authorised by the Headteacher (and the Local Authority if required).

Pupil Preparation

- Visits are prepared for in advance using visual timetables, social stories, or pre-visits to the venue.
- Staff discuss strategies with parents/carers to ensure consistency between home and school.
- Structured Conversations (termly meetings with parents/carers) are used to review and amend Regulation Support Plans so that strategies remain current and effective.

Staffing and Support

- Staffing ratios are adapted to the specific needs of the group and individual pupils, and are higher than mainstream guidance.
- Where there is a foreseeable need for restrictive physical intervention, trained staff will be present in line with the school's RPI Policy.
- The Visit Leader ensures that all staff are fully briefed on risk assessments, pupil needs, and their individual roles prior to departure.

4. Staff Ratios

Risk assessments for each visit will ascertain the safe level of supervision required. On all educational visits, we will make sure:

- At least 3 supervising adults present for whole class activities (not including staff at the curriculum enrichment activity)
- Appropriate first aid equipment will be taken on all trips, in accordance with the school's first aid and health and safety policies. These are in reception.
- All supervising adults will be made aware of any medical issues or allergies at the start of the trip
- Adults without a DBS check will not be left alone with pupils at any time
- The visit leader will take regular headcounts and/or rollcalls

5. Parental Communication and Consent

Strong partnership with parents and carers is essential to ensure the success and safety of all educational visits. Parents and carers know their children best, and their insights are vital in preparing for and supporting pupils before, during, and after visits.

Consent

- Parents/carers are asked to provide blanket consent at the start of each academic year for offsite low-risk local visits and curriculum enrichment activities.
- Parents/carers have the right to withhold consent, but in line with our inclusive ethos, every effort will be made to make reasonable adjustments so that pupils can take part safely.

Communication

- Parents/carers will be notified of planned curriculum enrichment activities during termly Structured Conversations, where staff will share the purpose of the visit, the activities involved and transport arrangements.
- Staff will share how the visit links to pupils' Regulation Support Plans (RSPs) and what strategies will be used to support their needs.
- Communication methods may include letters, emails, the school website, phone calls, or in-person meetings.
- Home-school communication books and phone calls are used to provide regular updates for pupils who may need additional reassurance or preparation.

Post-Visit Feedback (when required)

- Parents/carers will be informed of the outcomes of the visit, including positive achievements, learning highlights, and any difficulties that arose.
- Where necessary, staff will meet with parents/carers to review and adapt a pupil's Regulation Support Plan to reflect learning from the visit.
- Parents/carers are encouraged to share feedback, helping us to refine future planning and ensure consistency between home and school.

6. Safeguarding

The safety and wellbeing of pupils and staff is the highest priority, and all visits are planned and delivered in line with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, the Local Authority procedures, and statutory guidance.

Safeguarding on Visits

- All accompanying adults must have an enhanced DBS check and be authorised by the Headteacher.
- The Visit Leader is responsible for ensuring staff understand safeguarding procedures and know how to respond to concerns while off-site.
- Staff will have access to pupils' Regulation Support Plans (RSPs) and medical information to ensure that SEMH and health needs are supported consistently.
- Staff ratios will reflect the needs of the group, and one-to-one support will be provided where identified in risk assessments.
- Where a safeguarding concern arises, staff must contact the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) immediately, following school policy.
- All curriculum enrichment activities have been quality assured by a member of the senior leadership team. This is completed annually unless any changes are identified prior.

Medical and First Aid

- At least one staff member with up-to-date first aid training will be present on every visit or an identified member of staff at the curriculum enrichment activity with an up-to-date first aid qualification.
- First aid kits and any pupil-specific medical equipment (e.g., EpiPens, inhalers, medication) must be carried at all times.
- Parents/carers will be consulted in advance where medication needs to be administered during a visit. However, sometimes there may be a need for emergency medication (e.g. EpiPen) that cannot wait for prior consultation.

7. Emergency Planning

Emergency planning is defined as planning for:

- Serious and unexpected risk
- Serious and life-threatening injury
- Individuals going missing
- A serious breach of safeguarding expectations

The trip leader will be familiar with these plans for each visit.

In the case of an emergency, the trip leader or other supervising adult will contact the school office. The school office will then contact parents/carers as required, and inform them of changes to plans or cancellations of trips and/or alternative travel plans. This will form part of a wider communication plan that covers how routine communications should be handled in such situations.

1 member of staff will always accompany a pupil seeking medical treatment.

In a case of a pupil being unaccounted for, the trip leader will search the area while another member of staff remains in charge of other pupils. In the unlikely event that a pupil cannot be found within 5 minutes, staff will follow the Absconding Policy procedures.

All incidents and accidents will be reported in line with our health and safety policy. Smaller incidents, accidents or near misses that do not require external reporting will still be covered by an internal report, to include steps that can be taken in the future to avoid similar incidents.

8. Use of External Organisations

We often work in partnership with external organisations, providers, and venues to enhance pupils' learning and broaden their experiences. While these opportunities add great value, safeguarding and safety remain our priority.

Selection of Providers

- External organisations will be chosen carefully to ensure they are suitable, inclusive, and aligned with the needs of our pupils.
- Where adventurous activities are planned, providers must hold the appropriate licences (AALA licence where applicable) and meet Local Authority requirements.
- Evidence of appropriate insurance cover will be requested and checked.

Safeguarding Expectations

- All external staff or volunteers working directly with pupils must have an enhanced DBS check or be supervised at all times by Vermont School staff.
- The school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) retains responsibility for safeguarding, even when external providers are engaged.
- Staff from Vermont School remain responsible for the overall supervision, wellbeing, and behaviour of pupils at all times.

Risk Assessments

- Visit Leaders and Senior Leaders will request and review the provider's risk assessments, but will also complete their own school-specific risk assessment that takes account of pupils' SEMH needs.
- Pupil-specific strategies, such as Regulation Support Plans (RSPs), will always be factored in, even if the external provider supplies their own documentation.

Roles and Responsibilities

- The Visit Leader will brief external providers about the needs of the group and ensure that staff roles are clearly defined.
- At no point will responsibility for pupils be handed over fully to an external provider
Vermont School staff retain primary duty of care at all times.