

Policy for the Management of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Offsite Visits

Greenside School



Approved by:

Date:

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1. Introduction and LA guidance

Greenside is a Hertfordshire Special School. Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) is an important, essential part of many classes. As part of Hertfordshire County Council, we formally adopt the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel's (OEAP's) 'National Guidance' as our principle source of guidance and information regarding good practice for LOtC and Offsite Visits.

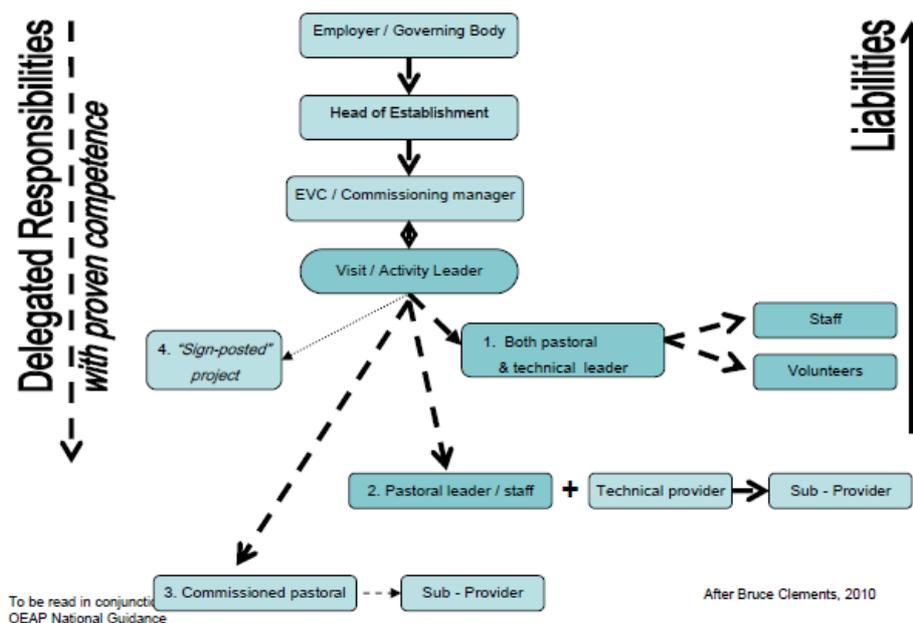
It is a legal expectation that the school works within the requirements of the HCC, the OEAP's guidance can be found at:

<http://oeapng.info/>

Where Greenside commissions a LOtC activity, they must ensure that such commissioned agent has either:

1. Adopted Hertfordshire or OEAP national Guidance
- Or
2. Has systems and procedures in place where the standards are not less than those required by OEAP National Guidance

The Flow chart below illustrates line of responsibility and liability:



2. Scope and Remit

The OEAP document clarifies the range in which employees activities at Greenside requires to use this guidance. In summary, it applies to Greenside employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of learners undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of learners undertaking experiences that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom
- facilitating experiences for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- deploying staff who supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of there normal operational base;

This applies regardless of whether or not the activities take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.

For a more expansive explanation of legal expectations, all users of the guidance are strongly recommended to read the NG document: "Underpinning Legal Framework"

3. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

Establishment managers and Visits Coordinators

It is a requirement that Greenside has at least two senior member of staff should attend a Management of Offsite Visits (EVC) training course

At Greenside:

Alex Tomkins – Deputy Head is Head of Establishment in regard to Offsite Visits

and

Luke Simonds – Assistant Head is Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

Both have completed the EVC training course

Within Greenside Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Dave Victor (Head) and Dawn Brown (Assistant Head) both are competent to approve Offsite visits as per our procedure.

When the appropriate offsite Visit triggers the need for EVOLVE notification then Luke and Alex coordinate and sign off following HCC guidelines

Visit / Activity Organisers/Leaders/Supervisors

Those organising, leading or supervising visits or activities must be competent to do so. Members of the SLT assess competence, taking account of their staff's ability to lead and manage the learners partaking in the visit. Competence on specific activities may also be necessary, as well as knowledge of the venue being visited.

Adventurous Activities

Greenside and the LA acknowledges the immense educational benefits that adventurous activities can potentially bring to young people, and fully supports and encourages adventurous activities that are correctly planned, managed and conducted.

Where Greenside leads an adventurous activity, as defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (climbing, caving, remote trekking, waterborne activities), and other activities that present hazards over and above the everyday life, Greenside must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent and when appropriate hold relevant National Governing Body (NGB) awards where it exists.

In all cases where the Offsite visits has an involvement of adventurous activity, the EVOLVE procedure would be completed to ensure Risks are managed and the appropriate people notified.

Other Areas

Staff competence in first aid, minibus driving, lifesaving etc may also be needed, depending on the activity. Any Volunteers will also require induction and Safeguarding training/briefing prior to a specific visit. Training requirements in these areas should be identified as part of the risk assessment process

To support further clarification on Offsite visits. HCC has a nominated adviser:

Mark Falkingham
Offsite Visits Adviser and Outdoor Education Team Manager (OVA)
E-mail evolvesupport@hertfordshire.gov.uk

4. Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

Hertfordshire delegates the responsibility for formal approval of all Visits and LOTC activity to establishments Heads / Managers.

Although approval is delegated, establishments must notify Hertfordshire LA of visits and activities falling within any one of the triggers set out below:

- involves the provision of an adventurous activity to be led by a member of Greenside staff
- involves field work to be led by a member of Greenside staff in an area of "wild country"
- involves a journey abroad or a significant sea crossing (this includes visits to the Isle of Man, Northern Ireland, the Orkneys and the Shetland Islands)

Hertfordshire uses the on-line system for notification and approval, 'EVOLVE'. A key feature of this system is that visits and LOTC activities requiring notification are automatically brought to the attention of the Authority upon approval.

It is a requirement that all Hertfordshire children's services establishments should use the 'EVOLVE system

As well as notifying County using EVOLVE for the above activities. Greenside has included the use of EVOLVE to be necessary for activities and visits falling within any of these triggers:

- involves an over-night element
- involves a trip within central London

All notifiable visits (including Greenside's additional EVOLVE activities) should be submitted to the Authority at least 4 weeks before the departure date.

To support understanding of procedure Appendix 1, Visit Flowchart shows the steps taken on evaluating the need for EVOLVE (this is County Form and does not include our two additional EVOLVE requirements

5. Risk Management

Greenside has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed. – requiring them to be reduced to an 'acceptable' or 'tolerable' level. Greenside ensures that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place.

Hertfordshire and Greenside recommend a 'Risk-Benefit Assessment' approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes.

Greenside uses a clear Risk Assessment format (Appendix 2) which must be completed for any location visited on an Offsite visit. This Risk Assessment will also include risks presenting on the journey also. All completed Risk Assessments are signed off by a member of SLT and depending on whether they are regular (weekly visits) or One off they are recorded in different ways (see Appendix 3 for flowchart)

Any regular Risk Assessment must be reviewed prior to any changes in staffing, learners, weather or transport prior to each visit and formally reviewed each term.

Learners at Greenside can present their own risks both inside and outside school. When appropriate individual risk assessments are completed.

As part of each Offsite visit, each visit requires the use of 'green bag' which includes copy of the Risk assessment, personal details of learners in case of emergency, a first aid kit and any items necessary for a safe trip.

6. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of and adhere to Greenside's 'Critical Incident Procedure' which is in key locations in the school and a copy included in Offsite Visits 'Green Bags'

This procedure outlines what happens when a critical incident occurs.

7. Monitoring

Monitoring of Offsite procedures is completed via notification 'sign off' procedures in place at Greenside. SLT members are responsible for ensuring the procedures are followed and Offsite visits are risk assessed appropriately. Please see Appendix 3 for flow chart of procedures

In visits that trigger the need for EVOLVE recording then Luke S (EVC Coordinator) will support submission on to the system, while Alex T (Establishment Head – relating to EVOLVE) will have overall sign off before notification to County

8. Assessment of Leader Competence

National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of Hertfordshire Policy that all Hertfordshire Leaders of Offsite visits have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with the guidance

At Greenside competency is based on judgments made by SLT depending on a number of factors, which can include, experience of team offsite, risks, location etc.

The nature of our learners means that competency can be hard to judge and risks can present beyond the expected easily. Leaders need to ensure they have ability for direct communication with school at all times throughout out the visit. Unless already identified in risk assessments relating to 'no signal'

9. Charges for Off-site Activities and Visits

Greenside ensures that visit leaders take account of the legal framework relating to charging, voluntary contributions and remissions as set out in sections 449 to 462 of the Education Act 1996.

10. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

In general term, the law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is 'effective'.

Greenside to ensure there is an appropriate level of supervision at all times for all visits and that such supervision is effective. This must have been approved by the a member of SLT prior to the visit.

Effective supervision should be determined by proper consideration of:

- age (including the developmental age) of the group;
- gender issues;
- ability of the group (including special learning needs, behavioural, medical and vulnerability characteristics etc);
- nature and location of the activity (including the type of activity, duration, skill levels involved, as well as the time of year and prevailing conditions,
- staff competence.
- Any Risk Reduction Plans and other SEND need

Consideration should be given to the implications of one member of staff effectively being removed from the intended supervision arrangements for a period of time e.g. to accompany a pupil to hospital.

Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits. Any such arrangement must be made with specific agreement by the Head of Establishment beforehand, together with a risk assessment where appropriate.

11. Disclosure and Barring Service Checks

Greenside employees who are working in Regulated Activity either with young people or carrying out certain activities for adults, must undergo an enhanced DBS check as part of their recruitment process

With specific reference to LOtC activities and Offsite Visits, HCC defines a Regulated Activity for Children is defined as any adult (staff or volunteer) carrying out **unsupervised activities at least once a week, 4 or more days, or once overnight (between 2am and 6am) in a 30 day period**

For the purposes of this guidance, “activities” are to: teach, train, instruct, care for or supervise children, provide advice/guidance on well-being, provide relevant personal care, e.g. washing or dressing, or drive a vehicle only for children. (The Regulations give a more detailed definition.)

Volunteers used on a temporary or occasional basis or supervised volunteers no longer fall within the scope of regulated activity and are not entitled to an enhanced DBS with barred list check, although HCC can still carry out an enhanced DBS *without* barred list check.

It must be clearly understood that a DBS check in itself, is no guarantee as to the suitability of an adult to work with any given group of young or vulnerable people.

The placement of an adult within a situation of professional trust (where young people could be vulnerable to physical or mental exploitation or grooming) should always be on the understanding that an overview based on a common sense risk-benefit assessment process has been considered.

Hertfordshire’s recommendation to schools for trainee teachers on placement is that they only accept DBS’s obtained either:

- a) through the university or college for where the organisation has signed up to say that they will share our criteria to operate to certain minimum standards.
- b) from the person if they have registered with the Update Service and possess a relevant DBS check

12. Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances

All visits should be thoroughly researched to establish the suitability of the venue and to check that facilities and third party provision will meet group expectations. Such information gathering is essential in assessing the requirements for effective supervision of young people. It is a vital dimension of risk management.

Wherever reasonably practicable, it is good practice to carry out a preliminary visit. Establishment policy should clarify the circumstances where a preliminary visit is a requirement.

It is good practice for Visit Leaders to take full advantage of the nationally accredited, provider assurance schemes that are now available, which remove the need for use of Provider Assessment Forms (OV 6) and sight of Safety Management Systems documentation including risk assessments.

Examples of such schemes include:

- The LOtC Quality Badge
- AALS licensing
- Adventuremark
- NGB centre approval schemes (applicable where the provision is a single, specialist activity).

Greenside/Hertfordshire takes the view that where a provider holds any of the above accreditations, there should be no need to seek further assurances, unless there is specific and credible cause for concern.

13. Insurance for Off-site Activities and Visits

Employer's Liability Insurance is a statutory requirement and Hertfordshire holds a policy that indemnifies it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury suffered by any person employed by it. This cover should extend to those persons who are acting in a voluntary capacity as assistant supervisors. Hertfordshire also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for compensation for bodily injury from persons not in its employ, as well as for the accidental loss of, or damage caused to, property. Employees (as agents of the employer) are indemnified against all such claims, as are voluntary helpers acting under the direction of the employer's staff. The indemnity covers activities such as off-site activities and visits organised by all establishments and settings for which the employer is responsible.

Some level of Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all Hertfordshire employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident. However, Visit / Activity Leaders are advised that they should consider taking out less limited personal accident cover privately, or obtain cover through a professional association.

Hertfordshire Visit and Activity leaders should contact the local authority's Insurance Department to seek clarification of the above, including any circumstances requiring early notification of specialist activities to the insurer (01992 555480 or insurance@hertfordshire.gov.uk). They should also ensure they have obtained current information regarding any special policies that may be available to offer more comprehensive cover.

14. Transport

Careful thought must be given to planning transport to support off-site activities and visits. Statistics demonstrate that it is much more dangerous to travel to an activity than to engage in it and establishments **must** follow the specialist guidance provided in Hertfordshire's transport policy. All national and local regulatory requirements **must** be followed.

The level of supervision necessary should be considered as part of the risk management process when planning the journey, giving proper consideration to issues of driver-distraction when considering what supervision is required for the specific group of passengers being transported in a minibus.

The Visit Leader should ensure that coaches and buses are hired from a reputable company.

Minibuses

It is a requirement of HCC Policy that all staff must hold category D1 entitlement on their driving licence in order to drive a minibus where HCC is the employer.

Whilst it is recommended that Academies and other non-maintained schools should also follow HCC's policy, they should seek their own independent advice.

Hertfordshire's recommendations for minibus drivers are:

- All drivers should take a break every 2 hours (or sooner if tired).
- The break should be a minimum of 15 minutes. Second and subsequent breaks may need to be longer to prevent fatigue.

- After 4½ hours of driving, the accumulated length of breaks from driving should be at least 45 minutes.
- If you do no other work than driving, your maximum working day should be 13 hours, of which you should spend no more than 9 hours driving.
- If you do any other work as well as driving, your maximum working day, taking account of other work undertaken before starting a journey, should be 10 hours, of which you should spend no more than 4 hours driving.

See HCC Minibus Policy and Manual

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/transtreets/rsu/driving/advice/minibus/>

15. Planning

Visit planning includes consideration of the question: *'What are the really important things that we need to do to keep us safe?'* It should focus on those issues that are individual to the specific event, taking into account the needs of the group (including special and medical needs), the experience and competency of the staff team, and the leader in the context of the event.

Significant issues must be recorded, either as notes or as an attachment on EVOLVE, and shared with all relevant parties.

Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on establishment procedures and employer guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved, have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process.
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained.
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes).
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required.
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team meet to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigour (an Ofsted expectation), then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised, and appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focussed and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a "Risk Benefit Analysis". Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.

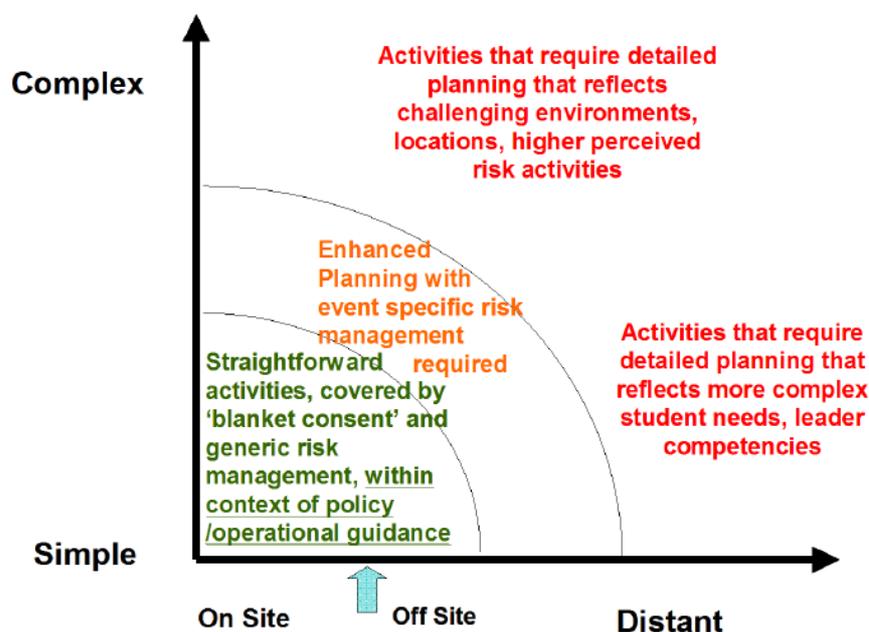
Greenside needs to take account of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the establishment and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed.

It is good practice to involve participants in the planning and organisation of visits, as in doing so they will make more informed decisions, and will become more 'risk aware' and hence at less risk. They will also have greater ownership of the event.

This practice is endorsed by HSE in *Principles of Sensible Risk Management*

- **S**taffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **T**iming – when? For how long?
- **A**ctivity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- **G**roup characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **E**nvironmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- **D**istance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

This diagram helps to support appropriate planning:



16. Consent and Consent Forms

Whilst there is no legal requirement for schools to obtain parental consent for offsite activities that are curriculum-related and take place in normal school hours, it is courteous to inform parents/carers of any such event and provide the opportunity for them to withdraw their child from that event if they so wish.

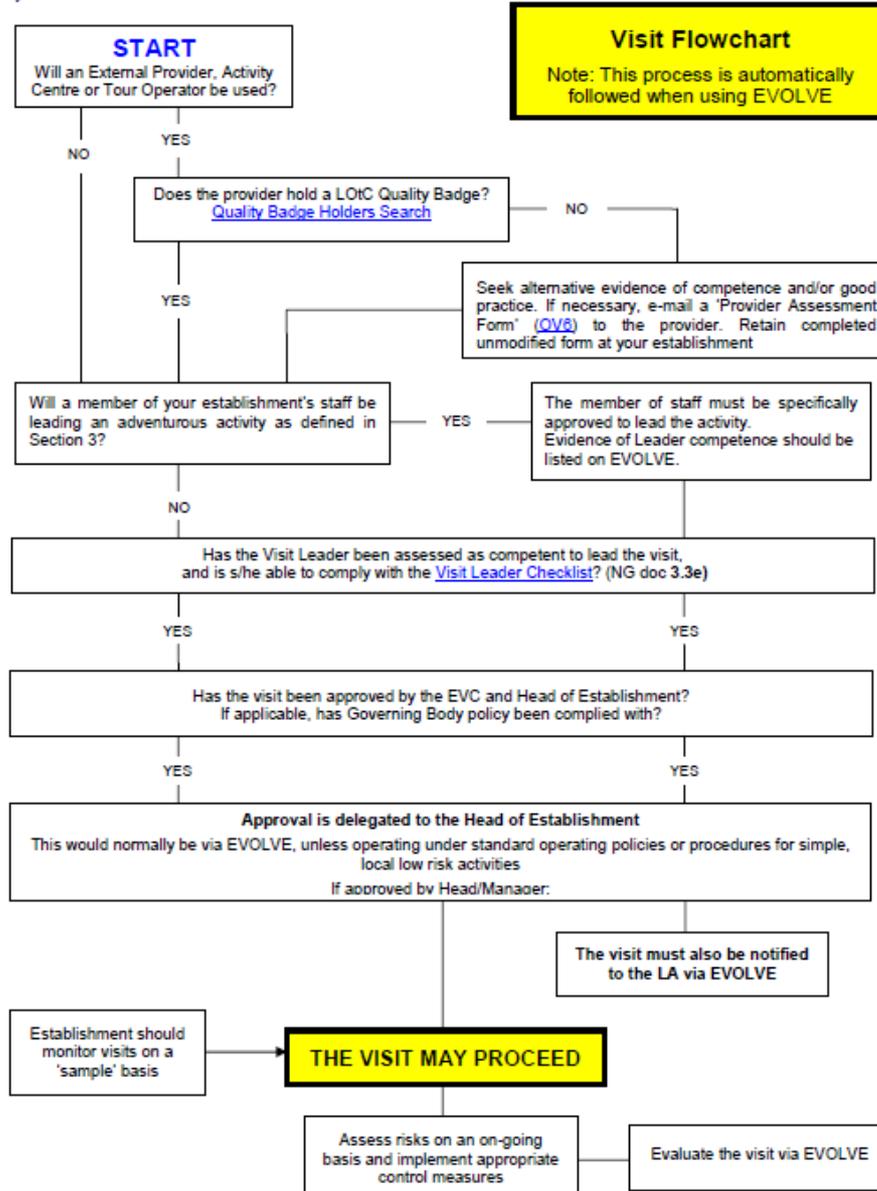
For residential visits, those involving adventurous activities and for which a charge is made, specific consent should be sought. It is important that, as far as is reasonably practicable, sufficient detail is provided about intended arrangements as to allow *informed* consent to be given (i.e. based on sufficient and relevant information so as not to be able to subsequently claim "I didn't know...").

The information contained on these forms should be regarded as sensitive and, as such, subject to Data Protection restrictions. For visits within the UK, whilst the establishment's emergency contact must have access to that information, at Greenside the Visit Leader is required to carry copies of consent forms with them.

For visits outside the UK consideration must be given to the security of any consent forms taken and the information they contain.

Appendix 1

Hertfordshire County Council
Policy Statement for LOTC and Offsite Visits



Appendix 2



Greenside Risk Assessment

Name of Risk Assessment:				Location:	
Assessment by:	Position:	Date:	Signed:	Date for Review:	<i>You should review this risk assessment if you think it is no longer valid, e.g. following an incident or any significant changes to the hazard such as new equipment or work activities</i>
Approved by:	Position:	Date:	Signed:		
What are the Hazards/Risks?	Who may be harmed	Control Measures (What are you doing already?)		Anything needed to help manage this risk?	

Appendix 3

