



# **Educational Visits Policy 2024-2025**

Reviewed by Rory Bailey (Educational Visits Coordinator): September 2024  
Approved by Governing Body:  
Next review due: September 2025

## Context

We believe that educational visits are an integral part of the entitlement of every child to an effective and balanced curriculum. Appropriately planned visits are known to enhance learning and improve attainment and so form a key part of what makes Barr's Hill School a supportive and effective learning environment. The benefits of children taking part in visits and learning outside the classroom include (but are not limited to):

- Improvements in their ability to cope with change and novelty
- Increased critical curiosity, resilience and motivation
- Opportunities for meaning making, creativity, developing learning relationships and practicing strategic awareness
- Increased levels of trust and opportunities to examine the concept of trust (us in them, them in us, them in themselves, them in each other)
- Improved achievement and attainment across a range of curricular subjects. Students are active participants not passive consumers and a wide range of learning styles can flourish.
- Enhanced opportunities for 'real world' 'learning in context' and the development of the social and emotional aspects of intelligence.
- Increased risk management skills through opportunities for involvement in practical risk-benefit decisions giving them the tools and experience necessary to assess their own risks in a range of contexts.
- Greater sense of personal responsibility
- Possibilities for genuine team working including enhanced communication skills
- Improved environmental appreciation, knowledge, awareness and understanding of a variety of environments.
- Improved awareness and knowledge of the importance and practices of sustainability.
- Physical skill acquisition and the development of a fit and healthy lifestyle.

## Application

Any visit that leaves the school grounds, whether as part of the curriculum, during school time or outside the normal school day, is covered by this policy.

Barr's Hill School adopts the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) National Guidance (<https://oeapng.info/about-ng/>) and uses eVisits, a web based notification, approval, monitoring and communication system, used by Sarah Atkins & Co to which staff have access (<https://www.e-visit.co.uk/SarahAtkinsAndCo/eVisit>).

All staff are required to plan and execute visits in line with this policy. Staff are particularly directed to be familiar with the roles and responsibilities outlined within the guidance.

The rest of this policy explains how visit approval and planning takes place at *Barr's Hill School*.

## Types of visit

We use three main categories to categorise our visits, for each of which the approval process is slightly different:

1. All offsite visits that are not adventurous, overnight or overseas
2. Any visit involving adventure activities
3. Any visits involving adventure activities and / or involving overnight stays or travel abroad

## Roles and responsibilities

**Visit leaders** are responsible for the planning of visits but should involve both accompanying colleagues and the children in this process. Staff must make appropriate checks of any third party providers. Staff are advised to obtain outline permission for a visit, from the head teacher, before beginning to plan and certainly before making any commitments.

The school's **EVC** (Rory Bailey, Operations Coordinator) will support and challenge colleagues over visits and learning outside the classroom. They are the first point of call for advice on visit related matters. The EVC will check final visit plans on eVisits before submitting them to the head for final approval.

The **Head teacher** Emma Martin has responsibility for monitoring all visits and final approval sign off.

The **Governors** will be advised of the intention to offer specific residential & overseas visits at Governors meetings in advance of the trip to enable Governors to challenge and support such visits.

## Staff Competence

We realise that staff competence is the single most important aspect of safe trip management and so we support staff in developing this competence in the following ways:

- An apprenticeship system, where staff new to visits assist and work alongside experienced trip leaders before taking on a leadership role
- Supervision by Senior staff of some educational visits
- Support for staff to attend training courses relevant to the role of visit leader

In deciding whether any member of staff is competent to be a visit leader the head teacher will consider the following factors:

- Level of relevant experience
- Any relevant training undertaken
- The emotional and leadership ability of any prospective visit leader to make dynamic risk management judgements and take charge of any emergencies that may arise.

- Knowledge of the children, the venue and the activities to be undertaken

## Visit Planning and approval

The internal school approval process is as follows for each type of visit:

1. Visits within the UK that are not adventurous or overnight, including local area visits, are put on eVisits and approved internally by the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). Visits should be submitted to the EVC via eVisits at least 14 days in advance.
2. Visits involving adventure activities must be put on eVisits and submitted to the EVC at least 40 days in advance. The school is required to submit these for Outdoor Adviser Scrutiny 28 days in advance. Visit leaders must check if an activity provider holds either an AALA licence ([http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider\\_search.php](http://www.aals.org.uk/aals/provider_search.php)) or an LOTC quality badge (<http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/search>). If they don't then they must complete a Provider Questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p)
3. Visits involving overnight stays or travel abroad require detailed planning to commence well in advance and the head must be kept up to date with progress. Checks must be made on any third-party providers and permission from the head teacher to use them be obtained before any deposits are paid. Third party providers who hold the LOTC quality badge (see above) do not require further checks. Those who do not hold this accreditation should complete and return a Provider Questionnaire (National Guidance document 8p), which visit leaders should scrutinise. The head will need to submit final plans for scrutiny to the Adviser 28 days before the departure date.

## Emergency procedures

A critical incident is any incident where events go beyond the normal coping mechanisms and experience of the visit leadership team.

The school has an emergency plan in place to deal with a critical incident during a visit (see Appendix 1). All staff on visits are familiar with this plan and it is tested at least bi-annually and following any major staffing changes.

When an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability; where it involves serious injury or fatality or where it is likely to attract media attention then assistance will be sought from the local authority.

## The Visit Leaders job list

The visit leader will ensure all the following steps are completed for any type 2 or 3 visit:

- Gain outline approval from the head to begin planning the visit and agree funding mechanism / charging policy.
- Ensure the visit:
  - has clear learning outcomes
  - has activities appropriate to the group
  - is planned to maximise benefits to the children while managing significant risks
  - is appropriately staffed
  - complies with the school's safeguarding policy
- Involve children in the planning of the visit, and how it will be managed, wherever possible.
- Ensure the School procedures are followed and that the visit plan is recorded on eVisits.
- Ensure all other staff, accompanying adults and children are:
  - fully briefed about their roles and responsibilities during the visit
  - know what to do in the event of an emergency
  - are given information they need about individual pupil needs.
- Emergency procedures must include what would happen in the event of illness or injury affecting the party leader.
- Ensure the base contact back at school is fully briefed and has copies of all relevant information.

## **Parental Consent**

The school obtains blanket consent for all offsite visits that are not adventurous, overnight or overseas. Information is sent home to parents regarding such offsite visits and parents have the chance to withdraw their child from any activity but separate consent is not required each time.

For any visits that involve adventurous activity or take place overnight or overseas, specific consent is required and a separate consent form must be sent home alongside the full information about the visit. This enables the school to request an update from parents on any changes to their child's medical details (in addition to the February and July updates we already do) prior to the event taking place).

## **Inclusion**

All students at Barr's Hill have an equal entitlement to learning outside the classroom. When planning the visit, the visit leader must ensure that student details are checked on the School MIS system to ensure that relevant notes are considered when planning and carrying out risk assessments.

## **Transport**

For visits using the School minibus, pre-use checks are carried out by the driver.

Staff cars may only be used to transport pupils when the driver has a clean driving licence and business insurance (a record of these being checked will be kept by the EVC). Any use of private vehicles will be subject to a specific risk assessment.

## **Insurance**

All insurance is taken through insurers approved by The Futures Trust

## Appendix 1 - Emergency procedure

The school's emergency response to an incident is based on the following key factors:

1. There is always a nominated emergency base contact for any visit (during school hours this is the office).
2. This nominated base contact will either be an experienced member of the senior management team or will be able to contact an experienced senior manager.
3. The visit leadership team and the emergency base contact will both have relevant medical and emergency contact information on all the trip participants (including staff).
4. Both the visit leader(s) and the base contact know to request support from the local authority in the event that an incident overwhelms the establishment's emergency response capability; involves serious injury or fatality or where it is likely to attract media attention.
5. The National Guidance role specific emergency action cards are carried by:
  - a. The visit leader
  - b. The first point of contact (eg the office receptionist)
  - c. The designated base contact senior manager
6. This procedure is tested through both desk top exercises and periodic scenario calls from visit leaders