

# Hele's School

## Policy for the Management of Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities (Secondary)

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Advisory Board and Principal are responsible. It does not cover work experience placements for which separate arrangements apply. The school endorses the Devon County Council /Torbay Council policy document "*Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health and Safety Policy 2024*" (OEVOSA) 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 Hele's School.
- 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 Principal

- 2.1 The Principal will:
  - 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 Safeguarding Policy and Staff Code of Conduct.
  - ensure that there is a suitably experienced and competent 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
  - Ensure all volunteers are subject to DBS checks when they have regular or unsupervised contact with young people.
  - 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.
  - Ensure outdoor education visit and off-site activities are available to all who wish to participate irrespective of gender, religion, ethnic origin, social background, special needs or playing ability.

### 3. Responsibilities of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator

- 3.1 Although holding the ultimate responsibility, the Principal has delegated specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent EVC. Name of EVC: Lee Cochrane.
- 3.2 The 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 delegated to the EVC are:
- to be the principal contact with the LA over planned visits.
  - 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 work with the Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other Senior Leaders to establish Standard Operating Procedures to guide the risk assessment process for visits and non-adventurous 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 visits and activities as outlined in OEVOSA.
  - to ensure that procedures to inform parents and to obtain their consent where necessary are in place.
  - to work with each Visit Leader 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.
  - 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.
  - ensure that under no circumstances are staff or volunteers where DBS checks are not obtained be left unsupervised or engage in regulated activities with pupils.

- 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 dynamically during the activity and make adjustments accordingly.

## 5. Responsibilities of Additional Members of Staff

### 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.
- Act 'in loco parentis' and do what is responsible to safeguard or promote the child's welfare in the best interest of the children in their care.

## 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

### 7.1 Parents 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 providing a wide variety of outdoor activities and visits design to challenge and develop young people. These inevitably feature a degree of risk that demands management. Arrangements will be achieved by a risk assessment led by the Visit Leader for each activity/visit or series of visits undertaken. This process is guided by establishment specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) documents which have been created to establish minimum standards and expectations for Visit Leaders. There are currently 4 SOP documents for various categories of visit. These are:

- SOP Day Visit Using Transport.
- SOP Day Visit Walking from School.
- SOP Overseas Visit.
- SOP UK Residential Visit.

- 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 Principal, EVC and other Senior Leaders and will be brought to the attention of anyone undertaking the role of Visit Leader.
- 8.3 The SOPs can be in the establishment doc section which is in the resource section on the Evolve system. Once agreed the SOPs should be signed by the Principal and the Designated Safeguard Lead.
- 8.4 In assessing the risks presented by a planned visit or activity, the Visit Leader must judge if the controls described in the SOP are adequate for controlling the risks. For each visit/activity, add any additional control measures needed in the enhanced risk assessment column of the SOP document.
- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 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 Principal/EVC Lee Cochrane 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**, e.g. visit to local places of worship, farms, public places, sports fixtures, etc.  
**Non-adventurous residential visits**, e.g. cultural visits to towns/cities, etc.
- Category B:**  
**Adventurous visits where activities are *delivered* by school staff** (e.g. Ten Tors, kayaking, etc.)  
**Adventurous day visits led by external providers** (e.g. visits to climbing centres, a pony trekking centre, etc.)  
**Adventurous residential visits to outdoor centres.**
- 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 Principal/EVC ahead of final endorsement by the Local Authority Adviser for Outdoor Education.
- 9.4 The policy of Hele's school is that Category A visits will be uploaded to the Evolve system to allow the EVC and school leaders to monitor the management of off-site visits.

## 10. Management of specific provision

10.1 The following arrangements apply to the management of specific provision for off-site visits and activities:

- Category A visits should ideally be treated in the same way as all other visits and offsite activities and an Evolve form completed. However, the Principal/EVC may permit specific local arrangements for certain departments and types of activities (e.g. PE Department sports fixtures) to continue without the use of Evolve in order to reduce the administration workload. These off-site activities must still be planned and risk-assessed in the appropriate manner, participants and their parents/kept informed of arrangements, and lists of participants supplied to Reception/out-of-hours contacts as for all other visits. **Prior to departure the visit leader and accompanying adults will know the medical/ dietary/ behavioural needs of all students taking part. Prior to departure the visit leader will inform XYZ of their departure and their planned location, which students are involved and their estimated time of return.**
- Use of the school mini-bus must be arranged in advance by booking through the school booking system, and the availability of mini-bus and drivers(s) checked before the visit is approved by the Principal/EVC. The mini-bus may only be used for college visits and must only be driven by qualified and authorised staff. The party/visit leader is responsible for ensuring that the agreed conditions of use are adhered to, all problems and defects are reported to the EVC as soon as possible, and that the minibus is left clean and rubbish-free inside after use. The driver(s) of the mini-bus have the standard responsibilities described to them during their training and must ensure that these are carried out in the manner specified.

## 11. Safeguarding

- 11.1 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 these before the trip or activity takes place.
- 11.2 Arrangements should be in place to enable contact with the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer 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.

## 12. The Provision of Training and Information

- 12.1 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 requesting a copy. Access will via the school launchpad, and additional guidance via the Evolve system.
- 12.2 The Principal 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 Principal/EVC Lee Cochrane, and records of qualifications will be uploaded to the Evolve system.

### 13. Action in the Case of Emergency

- 13.1 The Principal/EVC Lee Cochrane, 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.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 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.

### 14. Monitoring and Review

- 14.1 The Hub Advisory Board will monitor the consistent application of this policy in discussion with the Principal. The Principal and EVC will undertake the 1-day training course with Devon and Torbay Council and the EVC will attend at least 1 half-day briefing per year to stay up to date with current practices. The LA Adviser for Outdoor Education may be used for a half-day each year to check compliance and train staff as necessary, and will look at effectiveness of the policy and troubleshoot any areas for mitigation, which may include some of the following areas:
  - Levels of student participation in outdoor education opportunities to assess engagement and accessibility.
  - Feedback and assessments to evaluate the educational impact of these activities on student learning and development.
  - Feedback from students and staff to identify successes and areas for improvement.
  - Any stakeholder feedback through surveys to gather input from parents, students, and staff about their experiences and perceptions of outdoor education.
  - Ensuring all activities comply with local and national standards.
- 14.2 This policy will be reviewed:
  - 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.
  - If significant issues have been brought to the attention of the Hub Advisory board through the principal.

### 15. Submission of Visit Form Timescales

- 15.1 Visit forms must be submitted by the Visit Leader to the EVC in accordance with the following timescales. Failure to meet these timescales may result in the planned visit being

postponed or cancelled. **Any visits planned outside these timescales must first be agreed in writing with the EVC.**

Category A Day Visits – 4 weeks in advance into the EVC.

Category A Residentials – 4 weeks in advance into the EVC.

Category B Adventurous Day visits – 4 weeks in advance into the EVC.

Category B Adventurous Residential visits – 4 months in advance into the EVC.

Category C Overseas visits – 4 months in advance into the EVC.

## 16. Supervision/ratios

- 16.1 Staffing/pupil ratios are a risk-based judgement and should consequently be determined through the process of the risk assessment. It is not possible to set definitive staff/pupil ratios for all visits. Therefore, the following ratios should be considered as a starting point for consideration rather than being definitive.
- 16.2 **Category A visits:** Recommended minimum ratio of 1 adult to 15 group members.
- 16.3 **Category B visits led by external providers:** A minimum ratio of 1 adult to 15 group members.
- 16.4 **Category B visits led by establishment staff:** Speak to EVC for specific adventurous activities led by establishment
- 16.5 For other non-specified activities, guidance on ratios may be determined through risk assessment and advice sought from the Advisor for Outdoor Education (via Evolve) but will generally not exceed 1 adult to 10 group members.
- 16.6 **Category C visits:** A minimum of 1 adult to 10 group members.
- 16.7 **Ratios for special needs provision:** A minimum of 1 adult to 6 group members is recommended subject to the Visit Leader's own risk assessment based on their knowledge of the needs of the pupils and the activity.
- 16.8 The Educational, Health & Care (EHC) plan for each young person who has special needs will help to determine the degree of additional support they need for off-site activities. Young people with special needs, like all young people should be encouraged to participate in as rich a variety of outdoor education as possible.
- 16.9 **On occasion and with the Principal's approval it may be in the students' best interests for a visit to go ahead with only one supervising adult. When doing so the 'Teacher Down' emergency action card in the Evolve resources section will be used to consider how to keep the employee and students safe, so far as is reasonably practicable.**

## 17. Missing Pupils and Emergencies

- 17.1 Whilst careful planning of visits will prevent most problems, the nature of off-site visits and adventurous activities means that sometimes things will go wrong. To assist Visit Leaders, Headteachers, establishment staff and governors, a suite of emergency cards and emergency response documents are available at: Evolve/Resources/Guidance, Polices & Documents/Emergency Action.

- 17.2 The Visit Leader will inform the named SLT Visit Link when they have arrived at their destination and when they have returned to school. Additionally, let the named SLT Visit Link know if any issues arise during the trip.
- 17.3 In the school's Reception there will be a pack containing the trip information with staff and student contact details in case of emergency.
- 17.4 On all remote supervision trips, all Visit Leaders must have all students contact details and students must have a contact number of the staff. There must be pre-planned check-in times and check-in locations and this must be reflected in their risk assessment.
- 17.5 The School Community Sports hub is staffed late into the evening and will be used as an emergency contact point for out-of-hours trips. Details of the School Community Sports will be shared with all staff accompanying or leading off-site visits.

Rob Frankow (Chair of HAB4)  
 Chair of Advisory Board

Date Ratified at HAB4 meeting, 14/11/24

*Justine Mason*

.....  
 Principal

11/11/2024  
 Date

**This policy should be diarised to be reviewed in Sept 2026 when the LA policy is next updated**