

At Weaver Trust, we work to ensure that all in our community believe, belong, and thrive. This policy is informed by our Trust's vision of inspiring all to believe in their own ability to achieve their full potential, both academically and socially. By living by our values of being innovative, responsible and caring, we create powerful learning communities - positively impacting all.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 At Weaver Trust pupils will be provided with the opportunity to participate in educational visits and off-site activity as part of their educational experience and personal development. These activities and opportunities are integral to a rounded educational experience which excites, challenges, motivates and stimulates learners.
- 1.2 This policy sets out how Weaver Trust will manage this aspect of learning. The policy will include health and safety requirements.

2. Definitions

- 2.1 **Adventure Activities:** Activities that may take place in challenging environments that can present technical or environmental complexity in the organisation or delivery of the activity. Many adventure activities have well established National Governing Bodies that train, assess and validate the competency of staff to lead in the activity.
- 2.2 **Educational Visits:** All visits with a group of pupils that leave a school site to journey to another location either during the school day or for extended periods beyond the school day. This usually does not include work experience or activities in schools on split sites. This activity is planned and organised by the school.
- 2.3 **Off-site Activities:** Activities that occur away from the school with pupils, organised by the school.
- 2.4 **Learning Outside of the Classroom (LOtC):** An activity that takes place on the school site and further afield. Some of this work falls under the category of educational visits.
- 2.5 **Staff:** In the context of this policy, staff are defined as any employee/ registered volunteer of the trust/school.

3. Application

- 3.1 This policy applies to any of the following activities when undertaken by pupils under the supervision or control of staff.
 - Off-site activities, visits, or excursions
 - Activities that fall within the remit of Learning Outside the Classroom
 - Adventure Activities
 - Residential visits
- 3.2 This policy applies to activities that take place within or outside of normal working hours, including weekends and holiday periods.
- 3.3 It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance. Where there is any variance of policy between the National Guidance and local policy, this policy sets out Weaver Trust's requirements. Where employer's guidance differs from National Guidance, employers Guidance takes precedence.

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- 3.4 Where an employee commissions LOfC activity, they must ensure that this commissioned agency meets Weaver Trust’s requirements.
- 3.5 Planning, notification, approval, monitoring, and evaluation of all visits:
- 3.5.1 This is carried out through the Evolve system. Evolve enables the Evolve provider, such as Edsential, to check, provide guidance, approve (if approval is provided), monitor, evaluate and audit Adventurous, Residential and Overseas Visits.
- 3.5.2 All other visits do require approval from the school. It is highly recommended that all other visits are entered onto EVOLVE in order to support the school with the planning, processing, monitoring, and evaluating of visits.

Activity	Authorisation Required and Minimum Time Frame
Local Area Visits	EVC / Headteacher Authorisation
Off-site non-adventurous – non-residential visits	Headteacher Authorisation
Residential in UK / Overseas	Evolve Provider Authorisation <u>20 working days (term time) in advance of activity</u>
Adventurous Activities	Evolve Provider Authorisation <u>20 working days (term time) in advance of activity</u>
Overseas Expeditions and overseas visits not delivered by an LOfC quality badge provider	Evolve Provider Authorisation <u>Evolve Provider to be involved in the planning stages and final submission must be submitted 20 working days (term time) in advance of activity</u>

- 3.6 The Evolve provider, such as Edsential, have the discretion not to check or approve visits that are not submitted in the correct time frame. Schools can request late visit forms to be reviewed to ensure they meet Health and Safety requirements. This will be at the discretion of the Evolve provider and an additional fee may be charged
- 3.7 Any requirements or recommendations will be noted on the visit form. If these cannot be met the Evolve provider will process the visit form rather than approve it.
- 3.8 Undertaking a visit that has not been approved by the Evolve provider may affect insurance.
- 4. Policy Statement**
- 4.1 Weaver Trust recognises the important role that educational visits, off-site activities, adventurous activities and Learning Outside the Classroom (LOfC) plays in providing a rich and rewarding education for pupils irrespective of age, ability, or circumstances.
- 4.2 Weaver Trust actively supports and encourages such activities and recognises that this may involve exposing participants to challenges and risks with which they may not be familiar.

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- 4.3 Evolve providers, such as Edsential, can support Weaver Trust schools in the planning of the visit and to help identify and manage the risks against the benefits of the activity.
- 4.4 It is Weaver Trust's policy as far as is reasonably practicable that all activities falling within the scope of this policy should:
- Comply with recognised sector best practice guidance with respect to issues falling within the scope of this policy. For the purposes of this policy this signifies compliance with the National guidance issued by the Outdoor Education Adviser's Panel (www.oeapng.info) unless this guidance is specifically overridden by a requirement within Weaver Trust's Health & Safety Policy.
 - Be allocated sufficient resources (time, planning, staff, and budget) to enable activities to be undertaken safely.
 - Follow a Risk Management process that is informed by a Risk Benefit Assessment where the benefits of the proposed activity are balanced against the risks. Detail is to be included on how the risks will be managed. There may be some background or residual risk elements remaining and these could be viewed as acceptable. Part of the curriculum and learning for pupils is to know how to identify and manage appropriate risk. Where risks to participants are viewed as unacceptable then the activity should not be carried out until further advice has been sought from the Evolve provider.
 - Be monitored to ensure that the requirements of this policy are being met.

5. Third Party Providers (Internal and External)

- 5.1 Where activities that fall within the scope of this policy are being provided by a third party, Weaver Trust will require that:
- Reasonable checks of any external organisations that are contracted to provide any activities, regardless of whether these activities are being undertaken on or off-site, these are carried out to ensure that the external organisations are suitably trained, qualified and competent to provide such activities. These checks also need to ensure that the external provider holds appropriate public liability cover. (Evolve provider Edsential recommend £10 million for Adventurous activities)
 - Checks are made via an external validation process which may include the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), the LOfC Quality Badge (LOfC), and National Governing Bodies.
 - Where the provider does not hold the LOfC Quality badge the school will need to ensure the provider has completed an external provider form.
 - The performance of external organisations should be adequately monitored whilst engaging in activity to ensure that agreed practices are being met.
 - The significant findings of monitoring are acted upon and reported to the Evolve Provider and/or the Local Education Committee of the school.
- 5.2 To secure the policy objectives, the Evolve provide should put arrangements in place to:
- Establish and maintain systems and procedures, to enable schools to comply with the requirements of this policy. All schools will be required to record and manage activities falling within the scope of this policy using the Evolve online system. The Evolve online system should be used for any off-site activity or onsite residential or adventurous activity.

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- Provide advice to support staff with responsibilities for any aspect of this policy to meet any requirements placed on them.
- Provide written guidance and procedures for staff to support them to fulfil their responsibilities within the scope of this policy.
- Provide access to suitable and sufficient information and instruction and training for all staff who organise, facilitate, lead, and advise on such activities.
- Establish structures to enable the reporting of any significant findings of monitoring activity (e.g. incident reports) to the schools' management boards.

6. Organisational Responsibilities and Arrangements

There are specific responsibilities that apply in relation to the activities covered by this policy. These are identified in 6.1 - 6.7 of the policy document.

6.1. The School

6.1.1 The School is responsible for the following:

- Ensure that staff are trained and competent to carry out their role.
- Allocate sufficient resources to ensure that adequate competent advice is available to provide advice, guidance, and support to the school. This is the case when activities fall within the scope of this policy, in order to meet this requirement.
- Ensuring that the requirements of this policy are adequately monitored and that appropriate actions are taken to obtain compliance with the requirements of this policy. This is carried out using Evolve. Evolve enables the Evolve provider, such as Edsential, to check, approve (if approval is provided) monitor, review, and audit Adventurous, Residential, Standard Overseas and Major Overseas Visits.
- Reporting significant failings in this policy to the appropriate senior officer so that they may give direction; and if required, resources to ensure compliance with relevant legislation, National Guidance, and Industry Best practice to maintain effective oversight of day-to-day health and safety compliance.

6.2. Evolve Provider

6.2.1 Responsibilities of the Evolve provider are highlighted below:

- Maintain their competence and keep abreast of legal requirements and sector and industry best practice with regards to activities covered by this policy.
- Report significant changes to legislation, National Guidance and sector and industry best practice to appropriate key stake holders such as Headteachers, Heads of School, Local Education Committees, Trustees, and Educational Visits Coordinators.
- Provide advice and guidance to schools to support activities to be carried out safely.
- Monitor schools to ensure that they are complying with all relevant legislation on the conditions set out within this policy.
- Report the significant findings of monitoring including any recommended corrective actions to the appropriate bodies which may include: Headteachers, Head of Establishments, Governing

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Bodies, Trustees and Educational Visits Coordinators, HSE, CLOtC, and the Council’s Risk and Insurance Management Team so that they can discharge their duties in accordance with this policy.

6.3. Local Education Committees/Trustees

6.3.1 Local Education Committees/Trustee should satisfy themselves that the school has suitable policies and procedures in place, to adequately manage and monitor all activities falling within the scope of this policy. The results of monitoring should be discussed at Trustee/Local Education Committee and Headteacher Senior Leadership Team meetings.

6.4. Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School

6.4.1 The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for ensuring that any activities falling within the scope of this policy are:

- Adequately resourced (in terms of planning, time, staff, and budget) to secure compliance with the requirements of this policy and any associated procedures.
- Notified using the Evolve system to the Evolve provider, where required under the terms of this policy. Please refer to Section 3 ‘Approval of Visits’ on of this Policy and Guidance document.
- Ensure visits are led by suitably trained, qualified, competent and confident people.
- Checked comprehensively. if external organisations and third-party providers are providing the activity, the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School is responsible for ensuring that checks are carried out to ensure as far as reasonably practicable, that suitably trained, qualified and competent people deliver the activities that they have been contracted to provide. These checks also need to ensure that the external provider holds sufficient Public Liability Insurance (PLI) in line with the Employer requirements.
- It is the responsibility of third-party providers to carry out suitable and sufficient risk assessments for all Educational Visits and Offsite Activities that they provide for the school. This can be checked by using a provider with a LOtC Quality Badge and AALA (Adventure Activity Licensing Authority) accreditation (if applicable). If no LOtC Quality Badge is held then a Provider Form will need to be submitted for approval.
- Covered by suitable and sufficient risk assessments and these are brought to the attention of all staff, including volunteers involved/supporting the activity. These should be checked in relation to risk management systems. Risk management systems are required to be in place using a risk benefit assessment tool to ensure that adequate risk management measures are implemented. For activities provided and delivered by third parties reasonable checks of the provider using the risk management system should be used. The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School is not responsible for Providers’ risk assessments and should not undertake any further risk assessments of a Providers’ activities.
- Monitor visits, any significant findings reported to the Evolve provider and to the school’s Local Education Committee/Trust Board so they can maintain effective oversight of these activities.

6.4.2 The DfE states schools should appoint an Educational Visits Co-Ordinator and ensure they have the training they need. Where such appointments are made the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School remains responsible for the standard level of compliance that is to be achieved. Schools must monitor the performance of these appointed person(s) to ensure that the required tasks are being carried out competently in accordance with legislation, Employers Policy and Guidance, National Standards, and Industry Best Practice.

6.4.3 The appointment of an EVC should have sufficient authority (i.e., they should normally be a senior member of staff) to enable them to undertake their role and influence working practices. The Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School should ensure that the EVC is provided with the necessary information, instruction, training, and supervision to enable them to discharge their duties effectively.

6.5 Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVC)

6.5.1 EVCs have a responsibility to ensure that they bring any significant failings relating to compliance with this policy and its associated procedures to the attention of their Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School. Further information and guidance should be read in conjunction with the following <https://oeapng.info/evc/>

6.5.2 The duties of the EVC are outlined below:

- Ensuring that you understand how Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC), offsite activities and visits can support a wide range of outcomes for children and young people and raise achievement.
- Ensuring that you have attended EVC Training as recommended by DfE.
- Ensuring that LOtC, offsite activities and visits meet guidance requirements.
- Ensuring that establishment managers, visit leaders, assisting staff and voluntary helpers understand that all staff involved in LOtC, offsite activities and visits require access to training at an appropriate level to ensure that the employer's guidance and establishment procedures are properly understood.
- Ensuring that you have an establishment visit policy. As a minimum, the policy will need to make a link between the establishment's procedures and the Evolve provider's guidance.
- Supporting the head/manager with approval and other decisions.
- Ensure visits are submitted to the Head within an appropriate timeframe so that forms can be submitted via Evolve as required.
- Monitoring Visit Leader planning and sample monitor visits.
- Organising the training of Visit and Assistant Leaders (including volunteers).
- Ensuring that where the accompanying staff includes someone with a close relationship to a group member, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management.
- Ensuring that DBS checks are in place as required.
- Reasonable comprehensive checks of any external organisations that are contracted to provide any activities regardless of whether these activities are being undertaken on or off-site are carried out to ensure that the external organisations are suitably trained, qualified and competent to

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provide such activities. These checks also need to ensure that the external provider carries the required insurance, recommended by the Local Education Committee.

- Ensuring that establishment policy provides sufficient guidance to Visit Leaders about information for parents and parental consent.
- Checking that there are two 24/7 emergency contacts with the base for each visit and that emergency arrangements are in place.

6.5.3 This policy insists that:

- Medical and first aid needs, inclusion, charging, ratios, group, environment and activity are addressed.
- Emergency arrangements include emergency contact access to all relevant records, including medical and next-of-kin information for all members of the party including staff.
- Individual activities and visits are reviewed and evaluated, and this process includes reporting of accidents and incidents, complying with employer requirements and Reporting Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR) 2013.
- Policies and procedures are reviewed on a regular basis.
- A review should follow any serious incident or system failure. Risk management documentation must be updated if necessary.
- There is an establishment procedure for recording ‘near accidents/near misses,’ including any resulting learning points and action.
- You keep up to date via EVC update processes and EVC Revalidation courses as recommended or required.
- Assistant Leaders are competent to carry out the tasks they are assigned.
- Activities and visits are led by competent and confident leaders. The Visit Leader needs to be both accountable and competent to carry out specified roles and responsibilities. Being competent requires that the leader can demonstrate the ability to operate to current standards of recognised good practice, as set out in National Guidance.
- Ensure that a Critical Incident and Emergency Plan is in place and relevant contact details are current.

6.5.4 Further reading regarding the duties of specific roles include:

The duties of the Visit Leader: the following should be read <https://oeapng.info/visit-leader/>

The duties of the Assistant Leader: the following should be read <https://oeapng.info/assistant-leader/>

The duties of the parent/adult volunteer: the following should be read <https://oeapng.info/parents/>

6.6 Staff

6.6.1 Staff are responsible for taking care of themselves and for others affected by their actions or their omissions. In the context of this policy this significance is outlined below:

- Co-operating with line managers and supervisors by implementing the agreed actions of any risk management process and planning when they undertake or are involved in activities falling within the scope of this policy.

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- Reporting any failings in the risk management process relating to activities falling within the scope of this policy to the attention of management.
- It is an expectation of this Policy that all staff have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as have been assigned to them.

6.7 Staff Training and Competency

- 6.7.1 National guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competencies. It is Weaver Trust policy that all EVCs, Visit Leaders and Assistant Leaders have been assessed as competent to undertake their role.
- 6.7.2 Staff competencies and certificates must be uploaded onto Evolve.

Role	Mandatory Training	Recommended Training
EVC	Attend full initial training Attend update training every 3 years	
Visit leaders		Visit Leader training
Activity leader	Hold relevant NGB award Hold current relevant First aid certificate Or have been signed off as competent to lead for <u>specific activity</u> by the employer please see guidance doc section 28 – approval of staff to lead activity	
Any visit	Suitably trained, confident and competent person to carry out first aid within the environment of that activity. Where the group is EYFS a Paediatric first aid certificate must be held	Certified first aid qualification
Ski Course Leader	Hold current Snow Course Leader	Alpine ski course leader award

7. Emergency Planning, Critical Incident Support, and Incident Reporting

- 7.1 A critical incident may include an incident where any member of a group or individual undertaking an activity has:
- i. Suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality
 - ii. Is at serious risk or
 - iii. Has gone missing for a significant and unacceptable period.
- 7.2 Schools should follow their own Critical Incident Emergency plan and should always have this documentation during all Educational Visits and Offsite Activities. All schools must be aware of their Emergency plan.
- 7.3 Home based contacts and Visit Leaders must know the School's Critical Incident Emergency Plan.

8. Key Policies and Links to Other Policies

- 8.1 Weaver Trust discourages schools from signing waivers or disclaimers.

8.2 Approval of Staff to Lead an Adventurous Activity

8.2.1 Procedure for obtaining approval

- Staff who wish to **lead** (i.e., supervise or instruct) an adventurous activity, as defined in Section 21 of the Guidance Document must first upload details and scanned copies of all relevant qualifications and declaration of competency from employer (e.g., instructor certificates, first aid, etc.) to the ‘My Details’ section of their Evolve account.
- The Visit Leader should complete the Visit Form on Evolve as usual. During this process Evolve will ask for an Activity Leader Form (ALF) to be completed, which will request further details regarding the proposed venture (e.g., dates, venues, numbers, etc.), along with leader information outlining qualifications and historic and current experience OR verification from a relevant technical advisor. The ALF will then be embedded within the Visit Form for that visit.
- On receipt of a Visit Form (and embedded ALF), the Evolve provider will view the proposed activity in the context of the leader’s competencies and qualifications.
- Where approval is not granted to lead the activity, the Visit Form may be returned to the EVC via Evolve, with an attached note. In this scenario the activity should not take place until the meets the criteria noted.

8.3 First Aid

8.3.1 For all visits there must be a confident and competent person to carry out first aid within the environment of that activity. This would usually mean a certified first aid qualification.

8.3.2 If the group is EYFS then a member of staff must hold a Paediatric first aid certificate.

8.4 Water Margins

8.4.1 Hotels, Overseas Swimming Pools and Open Water Swimming

- Schools must liaise with the EVC before any visit is planned for hotel (and other) swimming pools. If entering water schools must check the lifeguard provision in advance. See section 20 for guidance on lifeguard qualifications. It is strongly advised that all swimming, both structured and unstructured, is placed onto Evolve, however curriculum swimming does not require Evolve provider approval. School staff must be aware of a child’s swimming ability before they commence activity.

8.4.2 Water Margin Activities

- All staff involved in water margin activities should be conversant with the guidance contained in Section 16 ‘Group Safety at Water Margins’. This document must be made available to all supervising adults in advance of the visit.

8.5 Walking in Open Country

8.5.1 The following minimum levels of technical competence apply where a member of the school’s own staff intends to lead an open-country activity:

- a) For school leaders of walking groups outside the UK or Ireland please contact the Evolve provider for further guidance.
- b) For leaders of walking groups in mountainous terrain within the UK and Ireland (600m or above):

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- Mountain Leader Award (Summer or Winter as appropriate) www.mltuk.org *or*
 - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser - see Section 28
- c) For leaders of walking groups in summer conditions in non-mountainous hilly terrain, (known variously as upland, moor, bog, hill, fell or down, with well-defined obvious boundaries such as roads and coastlines, where any hazards within it are identifiable and avoidable and where wild camping or movement on steep ground is not involved)
- MLT Hill and Moorland Leader along with the Expedition module if camping is involved, as well as relevant first aid qualification. <http://www.mountain-training.org>
 - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser - see Section 28
- d) For leaders of walking groups in terrain easier than that defined in c) or which is 1000m from transport access or 300m above sea level, the leader must demonstrate an appropriate level of competence. This may include one or more of the following:
- Lowland Leader award. See <http://www.mountain-training.org/>
 - Hill and Moorland Leader
 - Mountain Leaders Award Winter/Summer
 - Evidence of recent and relevant experience which has been appropriately corroborated.
 - An assessment of competence by the Head of Establishment or nominated competent individual.

8.6 Snowsports

8.6.1 Pupils may only participate in snowsports when under the direction of an appropriately qualified and competent person. This would normally be an instructor employed by the local snowsports school. Schools should therefore consider the merits of fully instructed lessons of 4/5 hours duration per day.

8.6.2 A member of staff intending to **lead** skiing or snowboarding (i.e., not using a snowsports school instructor) must be qualified as below - see Section 28 and section 2

Skiing: The minimum qualification to **lead** skiing on snow is:

- The Alpine Ski Course Leader Award (ASCL) www.snowsportengland.org.uk *or*
- The Alpine Ski Leader Award (ASL) www.snowsportscotland.org *or*
- BASI Level 2 Ski Instructor www.basi.org.uk
- A statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser' - see Section 28

Snowboarding: The minimum qualification to lead snowboarding on snow is:

- The Snowboard Leader Award (SBL) administered www.snowsportscotland.org *or*
- BASI Level 2 Snowboard Instructor www.basi.org.uk
- A statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser' - see Section 28

8.6.3 Pupils may only take part in off-piste activities if:

- The pupils are under the direction of a suitably qualified local instructor
- They remain within the designated controlled areas
- There is insurance in place that covers them to do so

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8.7 Private Cars

8.7.1 Where a private (staff or parent) car is to be used to transport pupils then this must be approved by the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/Head of School.

8.7.2 Executive Headteachers/Headteachers/Heads of School should see the Transport section in guidance section 14

9. Policy Review

9.1 The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout Weaver Trust.

9.2 Weaver Trust will monitor the operation and effectiveness of arrangements referred to in this policy.

9.3 Weaver Trust will review this policy annually.

Approved by:

Chair of Trust

CEO

Date:
