

Harbour Vale School

*(Part of the Sherborne Area Schools'
Trust)*

Educational Visits Policy

Updated:	January 2026
Review:	January 2027

Educational Visits at Harbour Vale School

Overview

Well-planned educational visits with a clear purpose are essential to delivering a broad and balanced curriculum. At Harbour Vale School, we recognise our duty of care and statutory responsibilities for the health, safety and welfare of pupils, staff, volunteers, providers and members of the public in connection with educational visits for which we are accountable.

Rationale

- Purposeful and safely managed educational visits are an essential component of a broad and balanced curriculum. They enrich learning in ways that cannot be achieved solely within the classroom.
- Such visits provide meaningful opportunities for all pupils to deepen their understanding of themselves, others, and the wider world. They can inspire improved personal performance, nurture lifelong interests, and, for some, spark pathways that lead to future professional fulfilment. Educational visits are therefore strongly encouraged.
- To realise these benefits, it is vital that we meet our duty of care and fulfil all statutory responsibilities relating to the health, safety, and welfare of everyone involved in educational visits.

Purpose

- To ensure that every pupil has equitable access to the benefits of educational visits.
- To ensure that all visits are safe, purposeful, and appropriately designed to meet the educational needs of participating pupils.
- To enable the school to define clear roles, responsibilities, training requirements, support mechanisms, and monitoring arrangements for staff, volunteer assistants, pupils, and external providers involved in educational visits.
- To ensure that, whenever necessary, additional guidance is sought from the LA / SAST and other suitably qualified or technically competent sources.

Guidelines

The organisation of an educational visit is crucial to its success. With rigorous organisation and control, a visit should provide a rich, learning experience for the pupils. Appendix 1 presents a recommended checklist concerning the organisation of a school trip or visit.

The following guidelines support the planning and implementation of educational visits organised at Harbour Vale School.

- All visits will have a clear, recorded educational purpose and will be planned sufficiently well in advance in accordance with good practice and effective planning procedures detailed in the Dorset Council's Policy of Safety and Guidance – Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities (2024).
- The Head of School will be responsible for the approval of all visits, or may designate this function to the Educational Visits Coordinator.
- A named and trained Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) will be appointed to support the Head of School. In the absence of a suitably trained Educational Visits Coordinator the Head of School automatically assumes this role. The Educational Visits Coordinator for Harbour Vale School is Natalie Willis (Teacher).
- There will be a named and approved Event Leader (and where appropriate, deputy) on all educational visits. This Event leader will be specifically competent for the role as detailed in the DCC Policy of Safety and Guidance Offsite Events and Adventurous Activities.
- Working with the EVC as necessary, the Event Leader will be responsible for all aspects of the planning, risk assessment and organisation of the visit. The Event Leader will assume full responsibility during the visit, including ongoing risk assessment. At Harbour Vale School, we use a variety of risk assessments and checks which have adapted from the Dorset Council and HSE guidance and templates, taking account of advice from the Council's Outdoor Education and Visits team.
- If appropriate, the Event Leader will ensure when purchasing goods and services that appropriate checks are made and that insurance and financial procedures have been followed.
- Wherever possible the group leader should undertake an exploratory visit to: ensure that the venue is suitable to meet the aims and objectives of the school visit; including - assess potential areas and levels of risk, ensure that the venue can cater for the needs of the staff and pupils in the group; and ensure that the

group leader is familiar with the area before taking a party of young people. If it is not feasible to carry out an exploratory visit, a minimum measure should be to contact the venue, seeking assurances about the venue's appropriateness for the visiting group. Copies of the venues own risk assessments will be requested and reviewed.

- Planning transport must take into account a comprehensive set of safety, operational, and welfare considerations. This includes ensuring passenger safety at all times and confirming that the driver is fully competent, appropriately trained, and holds the correct, valid licence for the vehicle being used. The expected length of the journey (covering time, distance, and the overall duration of the driver's working day) must be assessed to determine whether additional drivers are required. The nature of the journey, whether local, motorway-based, or international, should be evaluated alongside anticipated traffic conditions and weather forecasts. Suitable stopping points for rest, refreshments, and toilet breaks must be identified, and appropriate insurance cover must be in place. Planning should also include contingency funds and arrangements for emergencies or breakdowns, ensure adequate supervision throughout the journey, and confirm that any special requirements, including disabled access, can be fully accommodated.
- Minibuses -The driver is responsible for the vehicle during the visit. The driver must be qualified to drive a minibus and have a valid and clean driving licence. All drivers of the school's minibuses should have received training in minibus driving and the management of passengers.
- Private cars -Staff who drive pupils in their own car must ensure their passengers' safety, that the vehicle is roadworthy, and that they have appropriate licence and insurance cover for carrying pupils. The driver is responsible for making sure that pupils have a seat belt and use it at all times. Headteachers or group leaders must ensure that parents, volunteers and other pupils who transport pupils in their cars are aware of their legal responsibility for the safety of the pupils in their cars. The group leader should arrange a central dropping point for all pupils rather than individual home drops.
- All trips and visits will be recorded via the Dorset Council EVOLVE platform. This will ensure that the Council's Educational Visits team are able to review and provide advice on planning and risk mitigation for these trips, especially residential visits at home or abroad or day visits involving activities of a hazardous nature. Entries

within EVOLVE will be made at least 14 working days before the first date of the visit, unless it is deemed as an adventurous activity which will require the EVOLVE entry to be completed at least 6 weeks prior to the visit. Local Area Visits within the local community (i.e. within one mile of Harbour Vale School) will be recorded within EVOLVE using the shorter 'Local Area Visit' form. A map showing the boundaries of the school's 'Local Area Visit' zone is at Appendix 2.

- Trip Leaders will be responsible for organising a robust risk assessment and forms linked to the visit. This will include a relevant risk assessment following the SAGED model (see appendix 3), trip costing form, letter of information to parents / guardians (if required) and request for volunteers (if relevant, to support the visit). This will then be sent electronically to the EVC.
- Visit Forms will be reviewed and endorsed by the Educational Visit Coordinator, who will provide advice and assistance to the Trip Leader to add any additional controls or strengthening measures deemed necessary. Following endorsement by the Educational Visit Coordinator, Visit Forms will be reviewed and authorised by the Head of School.
- The completed paperwork will be sent electronically/physically to the school office to process (e.g. place the visit in the diary / send out the letter to parents / organise transport / costings - if required; etc.)

Parents and Carers

- Harbour Vale school will provide parents and carers with information about policy and procedures relating to the safe management of educational visits.
- Parents and carers will be given sufficient written and supplementary information about educational visits to enable them to make informed decisions and give written consent together with medical and emergency contact details.
- Whenever appropriate for higher risk, residential and foreign visits a briefing meeting with parents/ guardians will be arranged.
- Expectations with regard to behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents/ guardians. This information will include the

necessity of meeting additional costs and making collection arrangements in certain circumstances.

- Parents may give general consent for their child to participate in Local Area Visits within the local community (i.e. within the Local Area Visits zone defined at Appendix 2) via a one-off letter / consent form in entry to school. Examples of such visits include trips to participate in community activities in Sherborne town centre. Parents/guardians have the right to withdraw consent for their child to participate in such Local Area Visits if they wish.

Pupils

- Wherever possible, pupils should be involved with the planning of an educational visit, establishing codes of conduct, assessing and managing risk and evaluating their own learning, development, attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils should be adequately briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all educational visits. Ongoing briefings are an important element of learning and safety.
- Any pupils whose behaviour may be considered to be a danger to themselves or to the group may be stopped from going on the visit, if it is determined that this risk cannot be appropriately managed following a child-specific risk assessment. This will be communicated to their parents/guardians by the Head of School and discussed as appropriate. In such circumstances, the curricular aims of the visit for these pupils should be fulfilled in other ways.

First aid

- First Aid provision should be considered when assessing the risks of any visit. For adventurous activities, visits which involve overnight stays, or visits abroad there must be at least one (and preferably two) trained First Aiders in the group, holding a qualification equivalent to L3 First Aid at Work(or higher). All adults in the group should know how to contact emergency services.
- The minimum first-aid provision is: a suitably stocked first aid kit and a qualified First Aider appointed to be in charge of first aid arrangements.
- First aid should be available and accessible at all times. If a First Aider is attending to one member of the group, there should be adequate first aid cover for the other pupils. The Educational Visits Coordinator should take this into account when assessing what level

of first aid facilities will be needed & how close the party are to have access to first aid e.g. close proximity to an A & E hospital.

Supervision

- It is important to have a sufficient ratio of adult supervisors to pupils for any off-site visit. In determining the number and constitution of the supervising adult group, factors to take into consideration include: sex, age and ability of group; special needs pupils; nature activities; experience of adults in off-site supervision; duration and nature of the journey; type of accommodation; and competence of staff, both general and on specific activities.
- Supervision ratios should be determined based on the nature of the activity being undertaken, the environment that is being visited, and the specific needs of the group of children involved.
- As a general guide from the NSPCC, supervision for different age groups should be 9-12 years (1:8), and 13-18 years (1:10).
- Ratios should always be agreed with the EVC based on an assessment of the visit. Higher supervision ratios may be appropriate in particular cases, such as for higher risk activities, for particular groups of pupils or for all trips abroad. Higher ratios are also recommended for swimming activities.
- Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit will not be allowed for Hrabour Vale School children. An exception to this might be whilst on a residential visit supervised by fully trained staff, who are acquainted with the local conditions – but this would need to be risk assessed and authorised by the Head of School in advance. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a supervised activity, preferably in recognised bathing areas which have official surveillance. Where paddling is to be allowed on a visit, a ratio of 1 adult:4 children is a minimum.
- Where there is more than one adult supervisor, a group leader with authority over the whole party should be appointed.
- Where a high adult:pupil ratio is required, it is not always feasible to use school staff alone. Parents with appropriate clearance may be used to supplement the well known to the school and the pupil group.
- Any adult volunteer supervisors who have not been subjected to the Trust's formal volunteer process (and therefore do not hold a valid DBS certificate) must not be left in sole supervision of a child or group of children at any point.

- All adult supervisors, including school staff and parent helpers, must understand their roles and responsibilities at all times. In particular, all supervisors should be aware of any pupils who may require closer supervision, such as those with special needs or those with behavioural difficulties. Teachers retain responsibility for the group at all times.
- For the protection of both adults and pupils, all adult supervisors should ensure that they are not alone in a one to one situation with a pupil.
- If the school is leading an adventure activity, such as Kayaking, Trust and School leaders must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably qualified to lead and instruct the activity before they agree that the visit can take place. Qualifications can be checked with the National Governing Body of each sporting activity.
- Whatever the length and nature of the visit, regular head counting of pupils should take place. The group leader should establish rendezvous points and tell pupils what to do if they become separated from the party.

Inclusion

The Educational Visit Coordinator / Teacher / Head of School/ SENDCO will not exclude pupils with special educational or medical needs from school visits.

Every effort should be made to accommodate them whilst maintaining the safety of everyone on the visit. Special attention should be given to appropriate supervision ratios and additional safety measures may need to be addressed at the planning stage.

Emergency Arrangements

A school contact with a phone number/s must be identified for all trips that take place wholly or partly outside normal school hours. This school contact will be the link between the group and the school and parents. These should be taken by all groups going away from school out of school hours. In an emergency the group leader should take charge and should ensure that emergency procedures are in place. Clear arrangements must be in place for contacting the school or Headteacher or the school contact out of hours should it become necessary. A contingency plan should be in place in the event of delays or changes to timing of the return journey.

Every teacher on the school trip should have read or have a copy of the risk assessment, access to list of all adults and pupils on the visit with contact/medical information (calling school office if needed).

If an emergency occurs the main factors to consider are to establish the nature and extent of the emergency, ensure that all the group are safe and looked after, get the names of any casualties and get immediate medical attention for them, ensure that all group members who need to know are aware of the incident, ensure that all group members are following correct procedures, ensure a teacher accompanies casualties to hospital and the rest of the group are adequately supervised at all times and kept together, notify the police if necessary, notify the British Embassy/consulate if an emergency happens abroad, inform the school contact, provide details of the incident to pass onto the school, notify insurers – the school contact can do this, notify the provider/tour operator, get telephone numbers for future calls, write down accurately as soon as possible all relevant facts and witness statements and preserve any vital evidence including photographic evidence, keep a written account of all events, times and contacts after the incident, complete an accident form as soon as possible, no one in the group should talk to the media. No names of those involved should be given to the media. This should be dealt with by a contact at school, no one in the group should discuss legal liability with other parties.

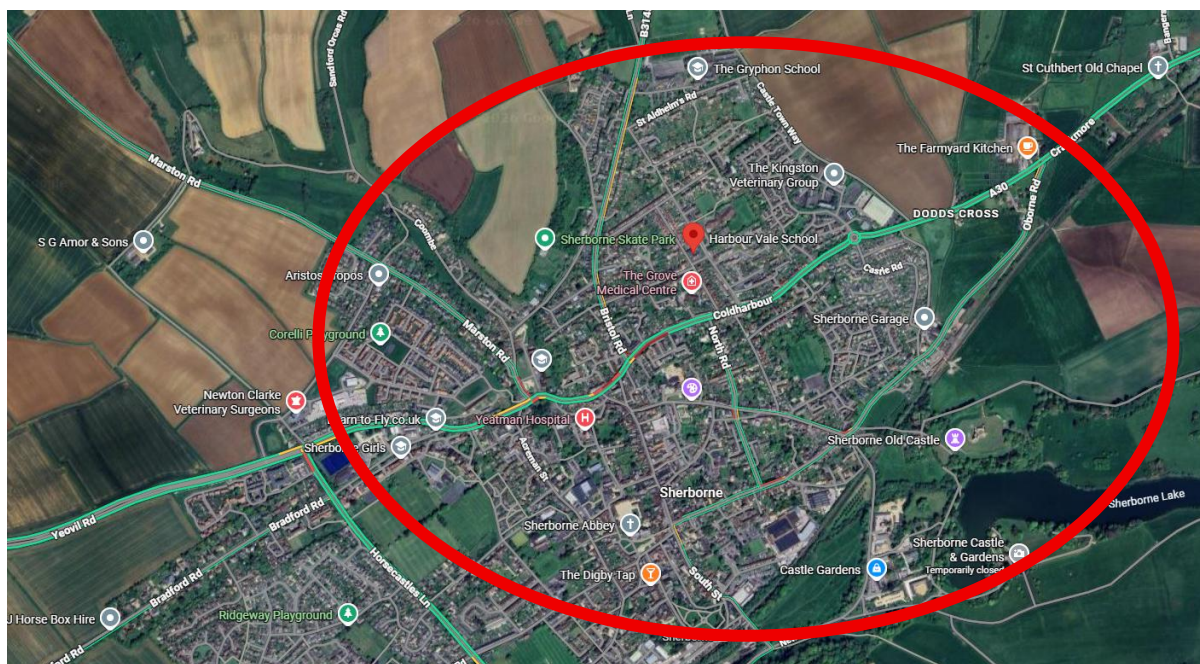
The emergency contact should ensure that the group leader is in charge and establish if any assistance is required from the school, Contact parents and keep them informed, Liaise with the LA and Headteacher, Report the incident using appropriate forms.

Appendix 1 - Checklist – Planning an educational visit/trip.

Below is a checklist designed to help those who wish to plan and lead an educational visit: *(Visit/trip organisers will need to complete all of these steps prior to a visit/trip taking place. Please ask the EVC for advice and guidance if required).*

	Completed?
Discuss proposed visit with EVC to ascertain dates etc	
Discuss the trip with the admin team and add trip to school calendar.	
Outline proposal given to Headteacher/EVC using EVOLVE.	
Contact venue to check suitability.	
If appropriate complete an exploratory visit to venue or letter from venue or other body with first hand information.	
Arrange and book transport and, if necessary, book school minibus/es.	
Check arrangements for physical disability if needed.	
Set up vetting, where necessary, of other supervising adults and of any private transport to be used.	
Create a plan of action for the trip – including times, dates, travel/route options and a plan B/emergency action plan (to be presented to SLT and EVC 1 week in advance).	
SAGED risk assessment done and uploaded to EVOLVE (at least 2 weeks prior to trip, unless trip is an ‘outdoor adventurous activity’ resulting in 6 weeks of notice being required).	
Check staff with First aid qualifications/training.	
School contact identified	
Emergency procedures and contingency plan in place.	
Parental consent completed. Check all received.	
Collate list of emergency contact numbers of parents, for accompanying staff and other adults.	
Allocate roles and responsibilities and provide clear instructions for all adults accompanying the visit.	
Ensure all accompanying adults are aware of the risk assessment and code of conduct.	
If appropriate, prepare list of things for pupils to take.	
Pupil’s briefing meeting held (could be held during a lesson). Pupils fully informed and prepared.	
Arrange for packed lunches	
Meet with the EVC to ensure all planning/paperwork is completed.	
Check for parental permission for photographs.	
After the visit complete an evaluation form on EVOLVE.	
On the day - Have a first aid kit (with nominated first aider), student register, emergency contact details, packed lunches (if required), school phone, any required finance for the trip (with trip leader) and signed all staff and students out in the main office.	

Appendix 2 – Local Area Visit Map – Harbour Vale School Sherborne



Appendix 3 – The SAGED model for risk assessments

