



Management of Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and Off-Site Visits

This policy has been written using the [HCC model policy statement](#) for LOtC and Offsite Visits (Feb 2025) as a guidance document.

Last Reviewed Date:	17/09/2025	Reviewed	01/05/2026
----------------------------	------------	-----------------	------------

Offsite Lead Teacher:		Date:	01/05/2026
School Business Manager:		Date:	07/05/2026
Headteacher:		Date:	08/05/2026

Date of Next Review:	April 2027
-----------------------------	------------



C O N T E N T S

1	Provision of Employer Guidance
2	Introduction
3	Scope and Remit
4	Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements
5	Approval of Notification of Activities and Visits
6	Risk Management
7	Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support
8	Assessment of Leader Competence (see also Section 4 above)
9	Role-specific requirements and recommendations (see 3.4 National Guidance)
10	Charges for Off-Site Activities and Visits
11	Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks
12	Staffing and Supervision
13	Preliminary Visits
14	Insurance for Off-Site Activities and Visits
15	Inclusion



16	Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations
17	Good Practice Requirements
18	Transport
19	Planning
20	Consent and Consent Forms
21	The Value of Evaluation of LOtC
22	Amwell View School Policy and Procedures - Activity Specific



1. Provision of Employer Guidance

Hertfordshire County Council has formally adopted the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel's (OEAP's) "National Guidance" as its own Employer Guidance and principle source of guidance and information regarding good practice for LOfC and Offsite Visits.

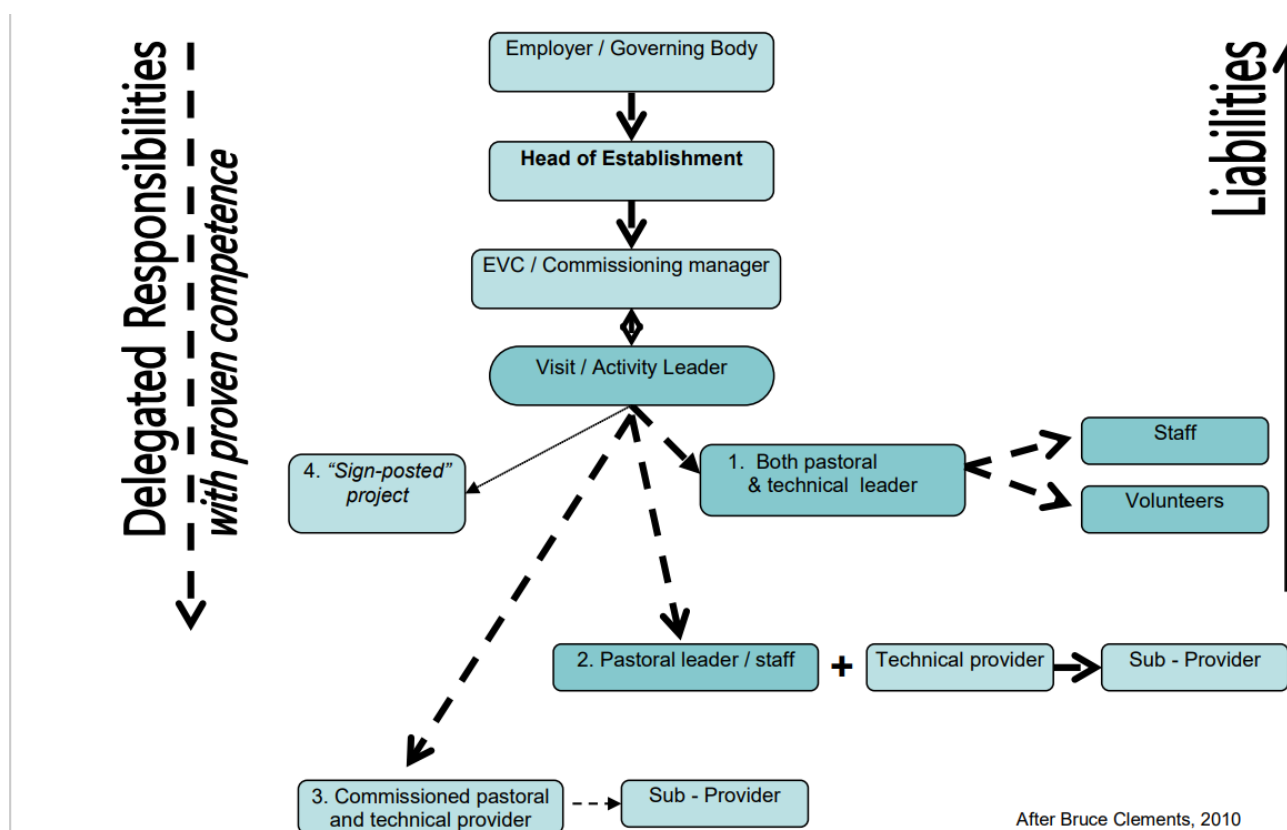
It is a legal expectation that employees must work within the requirements of their employer's guidance; therefore Hertfordshire Children's Services (CS) employees must follow the requirements of this Policy Statement in conjunction with the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel "National Guidance" (NG), this guidance can be found on the following website:

<https://oeapng.info/>

Where there is any variance of policy between the national guidance and local policy this Policy Statement sets out Hertfordshire's policy requirements which take precedence over any guidance.

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College's Governing Body wishes to opt into Hertfordshire's guidance, systems and processes for supporting and monitoring LOfC activities.

The flow chart below illustrates lines of responsibility and liability.





2. Introduction

The Staff and Governors of Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College acknowledge the immense value of off-site visits and related activities to young people, and fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

This document provides concise and supportive guidance for the planning and management of off-site visits and related activities. It is available electronically on the school's Shared Drive and on 'EVOLVE', along with a number of other supporting documents.

All visits and LOtC activities will be planned in such a way as to ensure that the benefits and intended learning outcomes are clearly identified and understood by the supervising adults beforehand and can form the basis for objective evaluation afterwards.

Amwell View School and Specialist Sports College uses Level 1 (Environment) and Level 2 (Pupil) Risk Assessments which are held on the shared staff drive. The Hertfordshire's Internet-based system, 'EVOLVE', will assist to facilitate the efficient planning, management, approval, and evaluation of visits. The Amwell View School admin team will set up an account for all staff that lead or accompany visits so that they have access to their own 'EVOLVE' account. Risk assessments will then be reviewed and processed by the establishment's Educational Visits Co-ordinator [Hayley Warrington] and ultimately approved by the Head.

Arrangements and considerations for all visits and LOtC activities will be recorded, either on 'EVOLVE', by means of standard operating procedures using the Level 1 and Level 2 risk assessments.

3. Scope and Remit

NG document 1c "Status, Remit and Rationale" clarifies the range of employees whose work requires them to use the guidance. In summary, it applies to employees whose work involves any one of the following:

- direct supervision of young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their normal operational base;
- direct supervision of young people 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 will supervise or facilitate experiences of or for young people undertaking experiences beyond the boundary of their 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: 3.2a **"Underpinning Legal Framework and Duty of Care"**



4. Ensuring Understanding of Basic Requirements

As an employer, Hertfordshire is required to ensure that its employees are provided with:

- appropriate guidance relating to visits and LOtC activity;
- training courses to support the guidance to ensure that it is understood;
- suitable systems and processes to ensure that those trained are kept updated;
- access to advice, support and further training from appointed Advisers that have proven expertise and professional understanding of the guidance, the training and expectations set by current good practice.

Appropriate guidance for the management of Offsite Visits and LOtC in Hertfordshire can be found on the **Employer Guidance page of The Grid** from where there is a link to <https://oeapng.info/>

Amwell View School uses the web-based system EVOLVE Light to facilitate the efficient planning, management approval and evaluation of visits. All staff who lead or accompany visits can access their own EVOLVE account, which is set up by Amwell View Schools Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) – Hayley Warrington. As well as being an efficient tool for planning and approving visits, EVOLVE also contains a variety of features including search and report facilities, downloadable resources and information, staff records and visit history, gateway access for parents etc. **EVOLVE - Hertfordshire County Council**

Establishment Managers and Visit Coordinators

It is a requirement of Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) that at least one senior member of staff from each Children's Services establishment (e.g. Headteacher / Manager) should attend a Management of Offsite Visits (EVC) Training course and a recommendation that a second member of staff also attends to provide some resilience (e.g. another member of the school's senior leadership team).

To help fulfil its health and safety obligations for offsite visits, each establishment must appoint an Offsite or Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who will support the Headteacher.

An EVC should be specifically competent, ideally with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the establishment. Commonly, but not exclusively, such competence will be identified in a person on the senior leadership team of the establishment.

Amwell View School's EVC is Hayley Warrington who supports the Headteacher with Offsite Visits through EVOLVE and attended EVC training on the 07/07/2025.. HCC recommends as good practice that the EVC should attend training and update training every 3-5 years.

The EVC should support the Headteacher in ensuring that staff assigned to lead and accompany visits are competent (see Section 8), with approval, and with other decisions.

Refer to NG document 3.4g **"Responsibilities Headteachers/Managers"**

Refer to NG document 3.4j **"Responsibilities EVC"**



Visit / Activity Organisers / Leaders / Supervisors (see also Section 8 below)

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

The relevant training courses in Hertfordshire are:

1. Management of Offsite Visits (EVC) Training – all Hertfordshire Children's Services establishments are required to have a current, Hertfordshire-trained EVC in post. Training received from another OEAP-accredited trainer, out of County, may be acceptable at the discretion of Hertfordshire's nominated adviser.
2. Management of Offsite Visits (EVC) Update – in line with the above recommended good practice, all Hertfordshire Children's Services establishments should ensure that their EVC undertakes a formal revalidation every 3-5 years.
3. OEAP Visit Leader Training – this course is advised as being good practice for newly qualified Hertfordshire leaders or those with limited experience of leading offsite visits or LOtC activities. Currently there is no revalidation requirement. However, to meet National Guidance requirements regarding leader competence, leaders must be current in their knowledge of expectations of good practice. Recent use of EVOLVE, together with the listing of Awards & Training against their user's account on the system, may be regarded as appropriate evidence.

Adventurous Activities

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.

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. If the establishment is leading an adventurous activity, as defined in the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 1996 (climbing, caving, remote trekking, waterborne activities), and other activities which present hazards over and above those in everyday life, the manager must ensure that the group leader and other supervisors are suitably competent to lead or instruct the children or young people in the activity. Competences should be demonstrated by holding the relevant National Governing Body (NGB) award where it exists. Where there are queries regarding the competencies/experience required, the Offsite Visits Adviser or relevant NGB should be contacted for advice. Standards of competence to lead adventurous activities can be found in [Appendix 1](#) (formerly Part F, section 2 of the Offsite Visits Manual.)

See also NG documents 6h FAQs "[Adventure activity qualifications](#)"; 7.1a "[Adventure activities](#)"

Other Areas

Staff competence in first aid, minibs drive, life-guarding, etc may also be needed, depending on the activity. Volunteers will also require induction training prior to a specific visit. Training requirements in these areas should be identified as part of the risk assessment process.



For the purposes of day-to-day updating of information, Hertfordshire EVCs and Visit / Activity Leaders are directed to the 'Home' and 'Resources' pages on 'EVOLVE' (which include information on how to access the relevant courses) available at [EVOLVE - Hertfordshire County Council](#). Information can also be found on the Offsite Visits pages on the "Hertfordshire Grid for Learning" [Hertfordshire's employer guidance for the management of learning outside the classroom \(LOtC\) and offsite visits - Hertfordshire Grid for Learning](#)

Where an employee experiences problems with finding the material they are looking for, or require clarification or further help an guidance, in the first instance they should contact the school's EVC (Hayley Warrington).

The nominated adviser for Hertfordshire is: Andy Smith

Offsite Visits and Outdoor Education Adviser E-mail advice@evolveadvice.co.uk

5. Approval of Notification of Activities and Visits

Hertfordshire delegates the responsibility for formal approval of all Visits and LOtC activity to establishment Heads / Managers. It is a requirement of this policy that Heads and Managers carry out this function in accordance with National Guidance.

Although approval is delegated the school must notify the Authority 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 establishment staff;
- Involves field work to be led by a member of establishment 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 by the school's Headteacher.

It is a requirement that all Hertfordshire children's services establishments should use 'EVOLVE' for all notifiable visits as outlined above, and its use is recommended for all other offsite visits or activities.

All notifiable visits should be submitted to the Authority at least 4 weeks before the departure date. This will give sufficient time for the Offsite Visits Advisor to review the visit and advise of any suggested amendments which may then be acted upon before the visit departs.

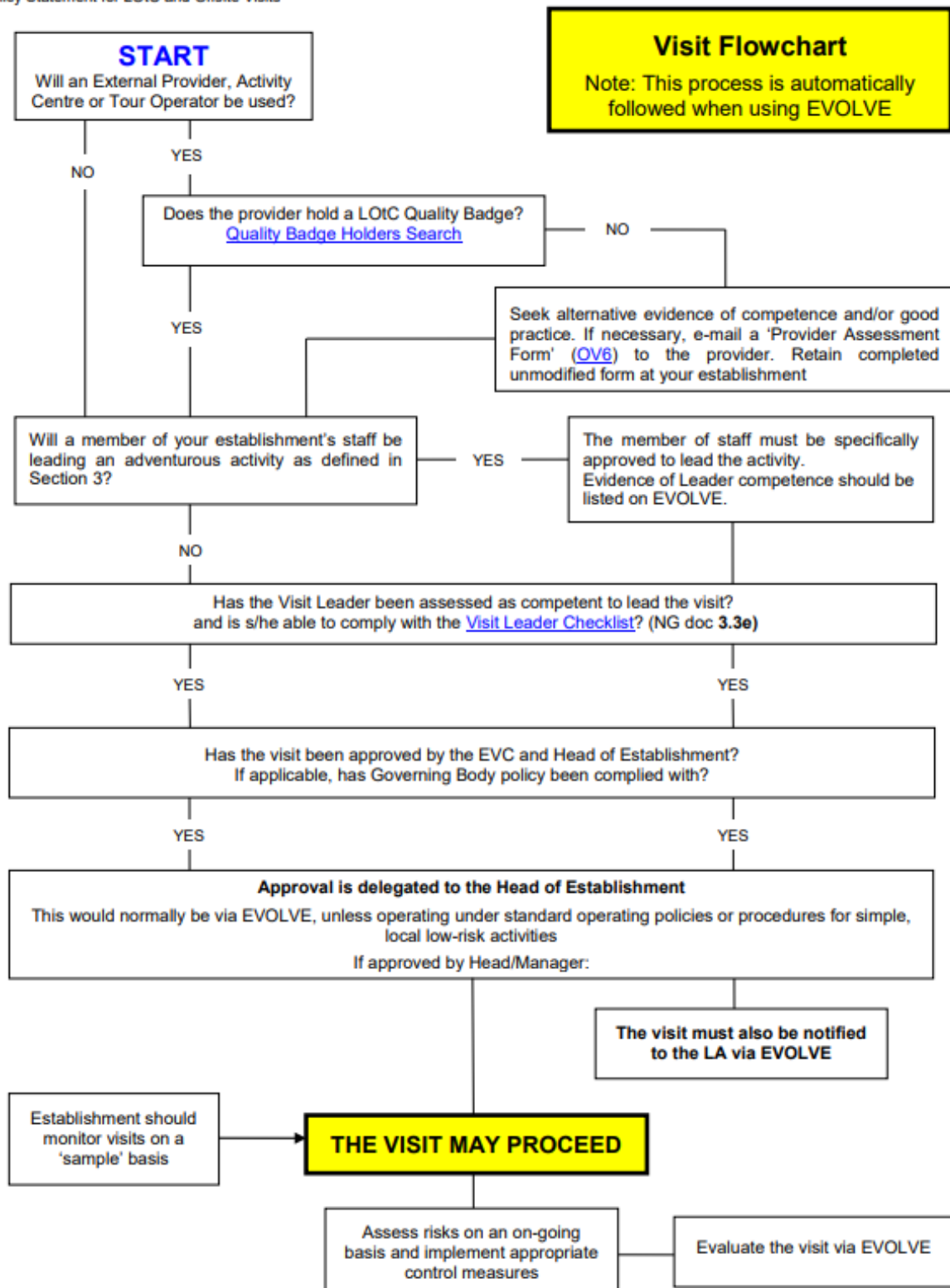
For further advice and help using the system, the establishment should contact support@evolveadvice.co.uk

Local Area Visits

Schools may define a list of specific routine and low-risk activities, that usually take place within the near vicinity of the school and are not notifiable, which are run according to a set of standard operating procedures, using the "Local Learning Area SOPs" template document (downloadable from EVOLVE), which can be added to EVOLVE by means of the "Local Area Visit" option under the 'Add' tab. Similarly, Sports or PE fixtures can be defined using the "Sports & PE Fixtures Policy" template and can also be added to EVOLVE by means of the "Local Area Visit" option.



Hertfordshire County Council
Policy Statement for LOTC and Offsite Visits





6. Risk Management

Class groups that have not been on an off-site visit before will be required to complete an exploratory visit to St. Margaretsbury Cricket Field. This will also be the case for when cohorts change each academic year, as that class would not have been on an off-site visit together. This is useful to understand group dynamics. Class teachers need to have conducted the exploratory visit to the field with their class before booking any other visits further afield or signing up to booked trips. Once the exploratory visit has been completed, classes are encouraged to take part in an off-site visit to the Tonwell Satellite Site. This site replicates the security and safety of the Amwell View main site and is an ideal location to take classes to on their first outing via minibus.

The trip leader must complete the level 1 and 2 risk assessment for each visit. If the visit has been booked/organised by another teacher (e.g. a specialist subject) the risk assessment can be completed by both teachers collaboratively.

The trip leader must complete a site-visit before embarking on the off-site visit to become familiar with the environment and be aware of any potential risks. This will also support the running of the trip e.g. knowing where to park, safest walking routes etc.

As an employer, Hertfordshire has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed - requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” or “tolerable” level. This requires that proportional (suitable and sufficient) risk management systems are in place, requiring Hertfordshire to provide such support, training and resources to its employees as is necessary to implement this policy.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. Hertfordshire strongly recommends a “Risk-Benefit Assessment” approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. This appreciation of the benefits to be gained through participating provides objectivity to a decision that any residual risk (i.e. the risk remaining after control measures have been put in place) is “acceptable”. HSE endorse this approach (see [Sensible risks in local government](#)) and advocate that it is important that young people are exposed to well-managed risks so that they learn how to manage risk for themselves.

There is no legal or Hertfordshire requirement to produce a risk assessment in a particular format; but there is a legal requirement for the process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to an individual or harm several people. Hertfordshire County Council ensures that establishments are supplied with an electronic portfolio of exemplar generic risk assessments. These risk management materials can also be accessed at [Offsite visits: risk assessments – Hertfordshire Grid for Learning \(thegrid.org.uk\)](#).

Staff must review and adapt the generic risk assessments to ensure that they are appropriate for their specific events and in line with their practice.



Refer to NG document 4.3c “**Risk Management – an Overview**”

Amwell View School’s Visit Leader will use the Level 1 and Level 2 Risk Assessment when planning an Off Site Visit. Amwell View School has created a bank of Environment Specific Level 1 Risk Assessments for Visit Leaders to use.

7. Emergency Planning and Critical Incident Support

Staff involved in a visit must be aware of and adhere to the school’s policy on emergency procedures.

A critical incident is an incident where any member of a group undertaking an off-site activity has:

- Either suffered a life-threatening injury or fatality;
- Is at serious risk;
- Or has gone missing for a significant or unacceptable period.

As an employer, Hertfordshire is committed to providing emergency planning procedures to support establishments of a critical incident.

Refer to National Guidance **Section 4.1 - “Emergencies”**

Visit leaders should have a contact number for a designated Establishment Emergency Contact(s) who **must** be contactable at all times for the duration of the visit. This responsibility may be shared by more than one person, particularly if the visit takes place over several days, in which case the visit leaders must be aware of who to contact and when.

The number of the designated Establishment Emergency Contact should not generally be the main school or school office number, especially if the visit or activity takes place out of normal school hours.

These numbers should be carried by visit leaders at all times during an off-site activity but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. *Under no circumstances should these numbers be given to young people or to their parents or guardians.*

For the Establishment Emergency Contact activate additional support from Hertfordshire, the following telephone numbers should be used:



Organisation	Contact details	Notes
Children's Services	0300 1234043	
Children's Services Business Delivery Manager	01992 555703	Available Monday – Thursday between 08:30 – 17:00 and Friday, 8.30 -4.30pm
Media / communications	01992 555582	This is Traded Service
Transport	0300 1234043	
Catering	Local Arrangements Apply	
Educational visits	Resilience Team (see below)	For serious or critical incidents only
Resilience Emergency planning	01992 556438 Out of hours 07919 391934	Available Monday – Thursday between 08:30 – 17:00 and Friday, 8.30 -4.30pm Out of hours 07919 391934
Health and safety	01992 556478	Available Monday – Thursday between 08:30 – 17:00 and Friday, 8.30 -4.30pm
Risk / insurance	01992 555480	
Legal	01992 555229	This is Traded Service
Human resources	01992 555000 (option 2)	
Educational Psychology / Safe Space	01992 588796	
Occupational health	0330 0084323	

Amwell View School's staff take their own mobile phone and contact details of pupils on trips.

Amwell View School's Plan B will be to Return to School, for example, where weather conditions or water levels might be critical, or where an overcrowded venue might necessitate an alternative option.

The trip leader is responsible for the planning and execution of the visit and is therefore responsible for their pupils whilst off-site. If at any stage during an off-site visit, the trip leader feels that the safety of their pupils and staff is compromised, they must make the decision to end the trip early and return to school.

8. Assessment of Leader Competence (see also Section 3 above)

National Guidance provides clear advice regarding the assessment of leader competence. It is an expectation of Hertfordshire Policy that all Hertfordshire leaders and their assistants



have been formally assessed as competent to undertake such responsibilities as they have been assigned in line with the guidance.

Refer to National Guidance [Section 3.4](#) 'Roles and responsibilities' for individual documents.

9. Role-specific requirements and recommendations (see 3.4 National Guidance)

National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found within Hertfordshire Children's Services management structures. These are:

1. [Direct of Children's Services](#)
2. [Lead Member for Children's Services](#)
3. [Line Manager of an Offsite Visitors Adviser](#) (or equivalent post)
4. [Offsite Visitors Adviser](#) (OVA, know elsewhere as Outdoor Education Adviser)
5. [Adviser \(other than an OVA\)](#) including Health & Safety Officer, School Improvement Partner
6. [Manager of an Outdoor Centre or LOtC facility](#)

Refer to NG [Section 3.4](#) "Roles and responsibilities" for individual documents.

National Guidance sets out clear and detailed responsibilities and functions of specific roles that relate to roles to be found within most Children's Services establishments. These are:

1. [Member of Board of Governors or Management Board](#)
2. [Headteacher/Managers](#)
3. [EVC](#)
4. [Visit or Activity Leader](#)
5. [Assistant Visit Leader](#)
6. [Adult Helper](#)
7. [Parents and Guardians](#)
8. [Volunteers](#)

10. Charges for Off-Site Activities and Visits

Hertfordshire Headteachers/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit/Activity Leaders must 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.

Refer to National Guidance 3.2c ["Charging for school activities"](#)

11. Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Checks

Hertfordshire employees who work, or are working, in a **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.

Refer to NG document 3.2g “**Vetting and Disclosure and Barring Service Checks**”

12. Requirement to Ensure Effective Supervision

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

Hertfordshire requires establishments 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 EVC and Head of Establishment and, where applicable, in accordance with Governing Body policy.

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 of 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

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.

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.

Refer to NG documents: 4.3b **“Ratios and Effective Supervision”**, 4.2a **Group management and Supervision”** and 4.3e **“Safeguarding”**.

13. Preliminary Visits

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).

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 of concern.

Refer to: NG documents 4.4g **“Selecting external providers and facilities”** and 4.4h **“Using external providers”**, see also 6a FAQs **“Asking for a provider’s risk assessments”**

14. 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.

HCC also holds Public Liability insurance, indemnifying it against all claims for 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.

Personal Accident Insurance is provided for all Hertfordshire employees in the course of their employment, providing predetermined benefits in the event of an accident.

Should there be any queries regarding insurance cover, visit or activity leaders should contact HCC'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).

Refer to NG document: 4.4c **"Insurance"**.

15. Inclusion

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning activities and visits are available and accessible to all, irrespective of special educational or medial needs, ethnic origin, gender or religion. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to participate fully and be actively involved.

Establishments should take all *reasonably practicable* measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- An entitlement to participate
- Accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- Integration through participation with peers

Employers, Head/Managers, Curriculum Planners, EVCs and Visit Leaders should be aware of the extent to which Inclusion is or is not a legal issue.

Under the Equality Act 2010, it is unlawful to:

- Treat a young person to whom one of the protected characteristics applies less favourably;
- Fail to take reasonable steps to ensure that such persons are not placed at a substantial disadvantage without justification.

Refer to NG document 3.2e **"Inclusion"**

See also docs 4.4i **"Special Educational Needs and Disabilities"**, 6e **"Special Needs provision"**, 4.4L **"Transgender Young People and Visits"**

Also see **"Hertfordshire Social Work Procedures Manual"** (previously entitled the Children in Need and Children Looked After Manual).



16. Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations

Employers, Headteachers / Managers, EVCs and Leaders should have a basic understanding of where and when the provision of adventurous activities is legally regulated.

The Activity Centre (Young Persons Safety) Act (1995) established the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations and the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA), initially responsible to the DfES. The scheme is now the direct responsibility of HSE and operated through the Adventure Activity Providers on behalf of the AALA was awarded to Adventure Risk Management Services (Adv-RMS) in 2020.

The intention of the regulations is to provide a regulatory framework to protect children, parents, teachers and schools when using providers of defined adventurous activities in closely defined environments. The regulations and supporting inspection regime provide a formal process of professional inspection to accredit that providers have effective safety management systems and processes, meeting a national standard.

The definitive source of advice on the Licensing Regulations is to be found in the Health and Safety Executive publication: **“Guidance to the Licensing Authority on Adventure Activity Licensing Regulations 2004”**.

Leaders should also be aware that the AALS license is an assurance of safety. It does not accredit educational or activity quality.

Leaders should also be aware that Local Authority-operated centres are not exempt from the regulations. Where Hertfordshire’s outdoor centres are providers of “in scope” activities as defined by the regulations, they are licensed accordingly.

Refer to NG document: 3.2f **“AALA licensing”**

17. Good Practice Requirements

To be deemed competent, a Hertfordshire Visit / Activity Leader, or Assistant Leader must be able to demonstrate *the ability to operate to the current standards of recognised good practice for that role*.

All staff and helpers must be competent to carry out their defined roles and responsibilities.

National Guidance sets a clear standard to which Hertfordshire leaders must work. The guidance states:

“a competent Visit / Activity Leader (or an Assistant Leader where they may take sole responsibility for a sub-group) requires:

- Knowledge and understanding of their employer’s guidance supported by establishment-led training. It is good practice for employers to provide formal and accredited training to support their guidance e.g. EVC Training, Visit Leader Training and such training may be a requirement prescribed by some employers.*
- Knowledge and understanding of establishment procedures supported by a structured induction process specified by the establishment.*



- *Knowledge and understanding of the group, the staff, the activity and the venue.*
- *Appropriate experience.*
- *In some circumstances (e.g. first aid, adventurous activities) a formally accredited qualification.”*

Staff participating in off-site activities and visits must be aware of the extent of their duty of care and should only be given such responsibilities as are in keeping with the above guidance. It is particularly important that careful consideration of competence issues is applied to both newly qualified and newly appointed staff. Establishments should view original documents and certificates when verifying a leader's qualifications, and not rely on photocopies.

Where a Volunteer Helper is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to of a young person taking part in the visit) they should be made aware of the potential for their relationship to compromise the Visit Leader's plans for group management. The Visit Leader should directly address this issue as part of the Risk-Benefit assessment, and it should be documented in the Risk Assessment.

Refer to NG document: 4.3a **“Good Practice Basics”**

See also 4.3c **“Risk Management”**, 5.2b **“Planning Basics”**, 5.1c **“Self-Evaluations”**.

18. 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.

Refer to NG document: 4.5a **“Transport general considerations”**

Coaches

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

Hertfordshire County Council does not 'approve' coach companies. Whilst UK legislation ensures that coach companies are fit for public use, the facilities available on coaches may vary. Liaising with other establishments within the Authority that have used a particular company (via a search on 'EVOLVE') will help determine the level of service that may be provided.

See NG document **4.5e “Hiring a Coach”**

Minibuses

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.



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.

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 4.5 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 Guidance and Policy documents [Minibuses in Hertfordshire](#)

Also see NG document: 4.5b [“Transport in Minibuses”](#)

Private Cars

Transporting young people in private cars requires careful consideration. Where this occurs, there should be recorded procedures. HCC Form [OV7D](#) is available for this purpose.

Refer to NG document 4.5c [“Transport in Private Cars”](#)

19. 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 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 such as the LOfC Quality Badge).
- 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.

Account should be taken of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent (see below)

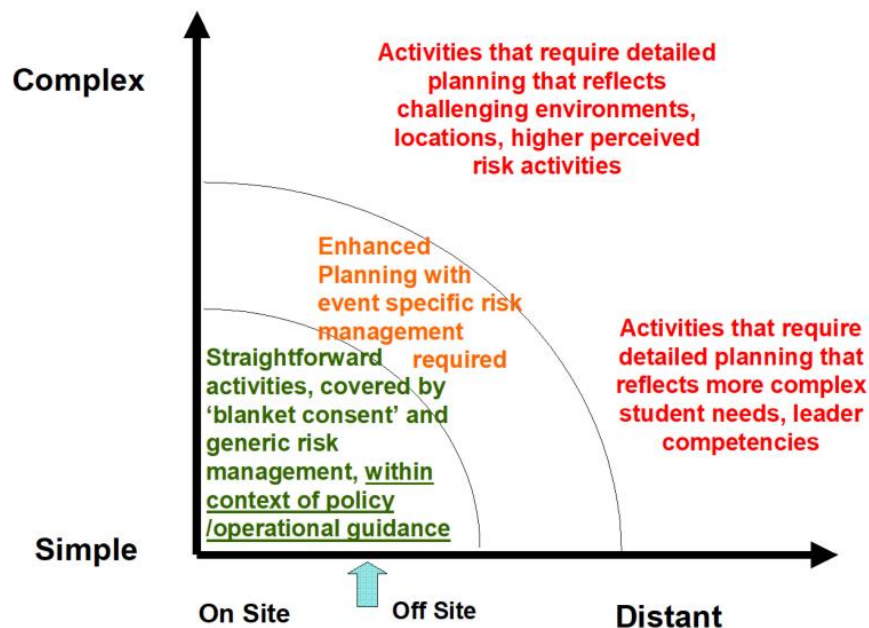
Establishments are encouraged towards developing their own Local Learning Area policies, for regular or routine activities. Such policies should be robust and equate to “standard operating procedures” that make it clear how the activities should be delivered, meeting all necessary requirements, as well as assuring educational quality.

The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature of complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as “**STAGED**” as explained below.

- **Staffing requirements** – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
- **Timing** – when? for how long?
- **Activity characteristics** – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
- **Group characteristics** – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
- **Environmental conditions** – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
- **Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base** – transport? residential?



Hertfordshire County Council
Policy Statement for LOTC and Offsite Visits



See also NG document 8.2a “[Learning Outcomes Mind Map](#)”

20. Parental Consent

Whilst there is no legal requirement for schools to obtain parental consent for off-site 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...”).

Hertfordshire provides an Event Specific Consent form ([OV7a](#)) and an Annual Consent form ([OV7c](#)) for routine and curriculum-related offsite activities which can also be used to update any additional relevant information such as emergency contact details, food allergies, medical conditions and any additional support which the young person may require. There is also a Self-Consent form ([OV7b](#)) for use with adults and young people living independently.

Consent may also be obtained electronically. In line with advice provided by the Law Commission, Hertfordshire recommends the following types of electronic signature are acceptable:

- Digital signature via an online system such as Parent Pay or EVOLVE (if schools have EVOLVE+);
- A scanned manuscript signature;
- A name or email address typed at the bottom of an email
- Clicking on a website button such as an “I accept” tick box.



Refer to NG document 4.3d **“Parental Consent”**

See also 8.1e **“Model Parental Information and Consent Form”**

Any information provided alongside a consent 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, it is the decision of the local establishment as to whether the Visit Leader is required to carry copies of consent forms with them. Alternatively, they can utilise the Participants Summary Information form (**OV8**) containing emergency contact numbers and essential details regarding specific needs, medical or dietary requirements etc. For visits outside the UK consideration must be given to likely requirements of local immigration services, along with the security of any consent forms taken and the information they contain.

Refer to NG document 4.4j **“Participant Information and Data Protection”**

21. Monitoring, Reviewing and Evaluation

It is good practice to monitor all LOtC and Offsite Visits to ensure that activities run according to plan and that risk management strategies are implemented as intended, are effective and worthwhile. As an employer, HCC ensures that there is sample monitoring of the visits and LOtC activities undertaken by its establishments principally through use of EVOLVE. Monitoring can take place at different points in an activity and Heads/Approving Managers and EVCs are encouraged to consider how and when this can be integrated into routine practice, either formally or informally.

The process of reviewing helps ensure that any learning which may be derived from an activity or visit can be recognised for future reference. It is important to celebrate the positives as well as learn from things which may not work as well as intended.

Evaluation is the process of assessing the quality of an experience to help determine its value and whether it is worth repeating.

The Ofsted report **“Learning Outside the Classroom – How Far Should You Go?”** (October 2008) makes statements in the strongest terms to support the value of LOtC, including the fact that it raises achievement. Hertfordshire Heads, Manager, EVCs and Visit Leaders are strongly recommended to familiarise themselves with the main content of this report which is available in the ‘Resources’ section of EVOLVE.

However, it also highlights the finding that even where LOtC is highly valued and provided to high standard, it is rarely evaluated with sufficient rigour – i.e. in the way that classroom learning is evaluated.

EVOLVE incorporates a post-visit feature that enables staff to evaluate their visits against the intended outcomes stated earlier in the planning process. This can be recorded at a basic level with smiley or sad emojis or in more detail by use of the adjacent text boxes to help achieve some of that rigour.

See NG documents 4.2c **“Reviewing”**; 3.2b **“Monitoring”**; 5.1d **“Evaluation”**.

See also 8.1c **“Model Field Monitoring Form”** and 5.1c **“Self-evaluation using the Ofsted framework”**.



22. Amwell View School Policy and Procedures – Activity Specific

Amwell View School encourages Learning Outside the Classroom as a valuable teaching tool and resource. The EVC (Hayley Warrington) liaises with teachers on a regular basis and with the community link teacher (Amy Gregg) to enable and support teachers to plan lessons outside of the classroom. Visits have included;

- Swimming in the community
- Theatre / Musical Events (BEAM Hertford)
- Fishing
- Walking along the canal in the village
- Boating at Herts Young Mariners
- Rock Climbing
- Walking to the Charity Shop in the Village
- Visiting local supermarkets
- Horse-riding
- Visiting public gyms
- Visiting community libraries
- Mudlarks
- Visits to Tonwell Satellite Site
- Walking through Tonwell village
- Visiting Tonwell village field and recreational park

Visits that require tickets to be purchased or are not 'typical' visits that happen often; teachers will discuss these with the Headteacher and Off-site Visit Lead first and obtain confirmation that the trip is able to go ahead, before purchasing.

Weather, Clothing and Survival

Where appropriate, the leader must obtain and act upon recent weather forecasts and local advice.

Participants should be adequately clothed appropriate to:

- The time of year, prevailing weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements;
- Likely changes in weather;
- The experience and strength of the party;
- The nature of the visit and environment.

When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for:

- Comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty;
- Comfort, insulation and shelter for the whole group;
- Provision of emergency food and drink;
- Torch;
- Possible need of signalling equipment and/or mobile phone (NB. Mobile phones may not work in remote areas);

It is primarily the responsibility of the visit leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity (e.g. Plan B) to suit changed or changing circumstances - for example: over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.