

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

## for the First Federation Trust Devon and Plymouth schools

<b>Adopted:</b>	<b>23 Oct 2025</b>
<b>Review cycle:</b>	<b>Normally two years</b>
<b>Next review due by:</b>	<b>Sep 2026</b> <b>To match LA template review</b>

### 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy covers all off-site visits and activities organised through the school and for which the Governing Board, the Trust Senior Leadership Team and Heads of School are responsible. The Governing Board endorses the Devon County Council /Torbay Council policy document "*Outdoor Education, Visits and Off-Site Activities Health and Safety Policy 2024*" (OEVOSA) as the basis for the school's policy for the management of visits and off-site activities.
- 1.2 The purpose of this policy is to explain *how* the overall OEVOSA policy will be applied in practical terms at a local level, and in particular, the specific roles, responsibilities and arrangements that will apply at the First Federation Trust Devon & Plymouth schools.
- 1.3 This policy also complements and should be read in conjunction with the Trust's and schools' Health & Safety and Safeguarding Policies.

### 2. Responsibilities of the Head of School

- 2.1 The Head of School will:
  - ensure all visits and off-site activities have specific and appropriate educational objectives
  - have overall responsibility for the approval of all visits and activities, based on compliance with the OEVOSA document and recognised good practice, even where this task may have been delegated to another named person

- ensure that all off-site visits, and especially residential visits, are carried out with reference to the Trust's and schools' Safeguarding Policy and the Trust Staff Code of Conduct
- ensure that there is a suitably experienced and competent Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) to oversee adherence to the OEVOSA policy and that the tasks associated with this role are clearly outlined in this policy
- ensure off-site programmes are led by competent staff who are appropriately experienced to assess the risks, manage the activity and manage the specific group
- provide relevant induction, training and other Continuous Professional Development opportunities for staff involved in the provision of visits and off-site activities
- ensure that for all off-site visits and activities risks have been assessed, the significant findings of these assessments recorded, and any appropriate safety measures implemented accordingly

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

- 3.1 Although holding the ultimate responsibility, the Head of School has delegated specified tasks to a suitably experienced and competent EVC. The EVC for each of the Trust schools is listed in Appendix A.
- 3.2 The EVC is responsible for carrying out the following agreed tasks and attending the relevant training and update training provided by Devon County Council.
- 3.3 The functions delegated to the EVC are:
- to be the Head of School contact with Devon County Council over planned visits
  - to establish monitoring systems to ensure that educational visits are undertaken in accordance with OEVOSA and the school specific arrangements named in this policy
  - to ensure that the management of visits and off-site activities is informed by an appropriate risk assessment
  - to work with the Head of School, Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and other Senior Leaders to establish Standard Operating Procedures to guide the risk assessment process for visits and non-adventurous activities
  - to manage and update the Evolve website, including updating staff lists and training records
  - to ensure that approval and endorsement arrangements for all visits are in accordance with OEVOSA requirements
  - to provide staff with support, advice and information that they need to comply with OEVOSA requirements
  - to ensure that leaders and staff have any relevant qualifications and are competent to lead and support particular visits and activities as outlined in OEVOSA
  - to ensure that procedures to inform parents and to obtain their consent where necessary are in place
  - to ensure that appropriate emergency arrangements are in place for visits and off-site activities

- to review accident and incident reports relating to visits and off-site activities to ensure that any lessons are learnt
- to ensure that any third-party provider / contractor / coach has been vetted for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA.

#### **4. Responsibilities of the Visit Leader**

##### 4.1 The Visit Leader will:

- have overall responsibility for the supervision and conduct of the visit or activity
- obtain approval and, where appropriate, Devon County Council endorsement for the visit in line with OEVOSA and the specific arrangements of this policy prior to undertaking the activity
- assess the risks to staff, young people and members of the public presented by the visit or activity in order to identify and implement any safety measures.
- carry out specific activities in accordance with the detail of OEVOSA
- use the school planning checklist provided in OEVOSA to ensure all procedures have been followed
- vet any third-party provider / contractor / coach for competence in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA
- brief all supervising staff, volunteers and pupils in roles, responsibilities and expectations
- inform parents about the visit and gain their consent in accordance with arrangements described in OEVOSA
- establish appropriate emergency and contingency arrangements for the planned visit or activity which will include the identification of sufficient First Aid cover
- continually re-assess risks during the activity and make adjustments accordingly

#### **5. Responsibilities of Additional Members of Staff Taking Part in Visits and Off-site Activities**

##### 5.1 Members of staff, volunteers and parent helpers should:

- Assist the Visit Leader to ensure the health, safety and welfare of others including young people on the visit
- Take time to understand their roles and responsibilities whilst taking part in a visit or activity.

#### **6. Responsibilities of Pupils**

##### 6.1 Whilst taking part in off-site activities pupils also have responsibilities about which they should be made aware by the Visit Leader or other members of staff, for their own health and safety and that of the group. Young people should:

- Avoid unnecessary risks
- Follow instructions of the party leader and other members of staff
- Behave sensibly, keeping to any agreed code of conduct

- Inform a member of staff of safety concerns

## 7. Responsibilities of Parents

- 7.1 Parents have an important role in deciding whether any visit or off-site activity is suitable for their child. Subject to their agreement to the activity parents should:
- support the application of any agreed code of conduct
  - inform the party leader about any medical, psychological or physical condition relevant to the visit
  - provide an emergency contact number
  - provide consent in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA

## 8. Risk Assessment

- 8.1 The First Federation Trust is committed to providing a wide variety of outdoor activities. These inevitably feature a degree of risk that demands management. Arrangements will be achieved by a risk assessment led by the Visit Leader for each activity/visit or series of visits undertaken. This process is guided by establishment specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) documents which have been created to establish minimum standards and expectations for Visit Leaders. There are currently four SOP documents for various categories of visit. These are:
- Day visits walking from school
  - Day visits transport from school
  - Residentials in the UK
  - Alternative provision

Some visits / activities will be repeated over each academic year where the risks will be very similar or the same. Therefore, when visits are 'routine and regular' in that they occur repeatedly each academic year, the measures taken to control these risks are listed in the school specific Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) documents.

- 8.2 These outline the minimum control measures that will apply to all such visits and off-site activities and have been drawn up by the Head of School and EVC and will be brought to the attention of anyone undertaking the role of Visit Leader.
- 8.3 In assessing the risks presented by a planned visit or activity, the Visit Leader must judge if the SOP are adequate for controlling the risks. For each visit/activity, the SOP document will be generated in either hard copy or electronically and the Visit Leader will *either* confirm these as adequate for the proposed visit/activity *or* the additional control measures needed will be listed in the enhanced risk assessment column.
- 8.4 Any activities delivered by school staff falling within the definition of Category B (adventurous), will have a separate stand-alone risk assessment; Adventurous Activities Led by School Staff Risk Assessment.
- 8.5 This process will be undertaken by the Visit Leader who, whilst being supported by the EVC, will be competent and equipped to complete this

task. To meet statutory requirements and to ensure sufficient communication with other staff involved, this risk assessment will be recorded using the risk assessment format on Evolve.

## **9. Approval of Off-site Activities**

- 9.1 The Head of School will be responsible for approving all off-site activities subject to assurances that arrangements are in line with this policy and risks are adequately controlled. This includes approving the Visit Leader for each visit or off-site activity.
- 9.2 There are 3 categories of visit:
- Category A:*  
Non-adventurous visits i.e. visits to local places of worship, farms, public places etc  
Non-adventurous residential visits i.e. cultural visits to towns/cities etc
- Category B:*  
Adventurous visits where activities are *delivered* by school staff (i.e. Ten Tors, kayaking etc)  
Adventurous day visits led by external providers (i.e. visits to climbing centres, a pony trekking centre etc)  
Adventurous residential visits to outdoor centres etc.
- Category C:*  
Visits of all types outside the UK
- 9.3 In-line with the requirements of OEVOSA, details of Category B and C visits will be uploaded to the Evolve on-line system to facilitate the approval by the Head of School/ ahead of final endorsement by Devon County Council Adviser for Outdoor Education.
- 9.4 The policy of the First Federation Trust is that Category A visits will be uploaded to the Evolve system to allow the Head of School, the EVC and school/Trust leaders to monitor the management of off-site visits.

## **10. Safeguarding**

- 10.1 The safety and welfare of children is paramount. In the event of a safeguarding issue or concern being identified during the trip or visit, the visit leader should follow the Trust's and school's child protection/safeguarding policy and procedures. All staff and volunteers on the trip should be made aware of these before the trip or activity takes place.
- 10.2 Arrangements should be in place to enable contact with the school's Designated Safeguarding Officer outside normal school hours if necessary. Contact details should be communicated to all staff/volunteers on the trip (as well as the visit leader) in case the safeguarding concern is about the visit leader.

## **11. The Provision of Training and Information**

- 11.1 A copy of this policy, along with the overall OEVOSA document, will be made available to all staff within the school who may be responsible for participating in off-site visits and activities and to any parent requesting a copy. Access will also be made available to the overarching OEVOSA policy, and additional guidance information, via the Evolve system.
- 11.2 The Head of School will ensure that staff leading or participating in visits are competent for the activities involved. When required, specific training will be undertaken, and competencies maintained in accordance with the requirements of OEVOSA. This process will be overseen by the Head of School and/or EVC and records of qualifications will be uploaded to the Evolve system.

## **12. Action in the Case of Emergency**

- 12.1 The Head of School and/or EVC will ensure that emergency arrangements are in place before approving visits. The Visit Leader will identify these arrangements via a process of risk assessment. Where necessary, this assessment must include the identification of contingency plans.
- 12.2 It will also include the identification of sufficient First Aiders, as well as emergency contact details which must include a school contact for outside normal hours if necessary.
- 12.3 Any accidents and incidents that occur during off-site visits and activities will be reported and recorded in accordance with the school health and safety policy. Accidents and incidents will subsequently be reviewed within the school to identify any learning points. These learning points will be shared with the Trust Senior Leadership Team where they may be applicable to other Trust schools.

## **13. Monitoring and Review**

- 13.1 The Governing Board will monitor the application of this policy in operational practice through the Heads of School and the Trust Senior Leaders.
- 13.2 The Governing Board will review this policy:
- Every two years
  - After any significant changes to the management of outdoor education locally
  - After any significant changes to the OEVOSA document
  - After an incident

### **Submission of Visit Form Timescales**

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

Category A Day Visits: at least four week weeks before the planned date of the visit.  
(Note: these visits do not go to Devon County Council)

Category A Residential: a deadline that allows enough time for parents to pay by instalments should be agreed with the EVC. This is likely to be several months ahead of the residential. (Note: these visits do not go to Devon County Council)

Category B Adventurous Day visits: at least five weeks before the planned date of the visit. (Note: the visit form must be submitted to Devon County Council with at least 2 weeks' notice)

Category B Adventurous Residential visits: a deadline that allows enough time for parents to pay by instalments should be agreed with the EVC. This is likely to be several months ahead of the residential. (Note: the visit form must be submitted to Devon County Council with at least 2 months' notice)

Category C Overseas visits: Not applicable as the Trust does not currently organise Category C Overseas visits (note: the visit form must be submitted to Devon County Council with at least 3 months' notice)

**This policy will be reviewed in Sept 2026 when the Devon policy template is next due to be updated.**