

The Darent Federation of Schools

Learning Outside the Classroom Policy



Approved by: Governing Body

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Next review due by: March 2025

Learning Outside the Classroom

Every young person should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

These often the most memorable learning experiences, help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside the classroom and visa versa.

Learning outside the classroom is about raising achievement through an organised, powerful approach to learning in which direct experience is of prime importance. This is not only about what we learn but importantly how and when we learn.

Learning Outside the Classroom MANIFESTO

Reference to the Federation throughout this policy refers to Sundridge & Brasted CE Primary School, Kemsing Primary School and all staff and pupils within these school communities.

The Federation governors and staff are committed to ensuring the long term development of 'Learning Outside the Classroom' (LOTC) as part of the foundations of our curriculum.

Rationale

We believe that all children, regardless of their circumstances or ability, deserve a rich and exciting curriculum, which will engage them and provide the motivation for success. The leadership team believes that this is best achieved when opportunities to experience learning beyond the classroom environment are woven through each topic. Many children learn far better when learning is made relevant and concrete; when they learning through active 'doing' rather than seeing and listening. Through LOTC, children develop better teamwork, communication, self-confidence, willingness to take risks in their learning, leadership skills, awareness of how to keep themselves safe and problem solving. Increased motivation and self-belief is evident where outdoor learning is embedded, having, in turn, a positive impact on attainment.

Aims

- To ensure LOTC is an entitlement of all our children.
- To ensure that LOTC is embedded in our curriculum, providing rich and progressive opportunities for all our children.
- To provide all our children with LOTC experiences which help to develop the 'soft skills' so important to success beyond school.

Learning Outside the Classroom

LOTC Definition

LOTC takes many different forms which are outlined here:

- **In the school buildings and grounds:**
 - We make the best use of the space we have available. This may involve the children performing their English work in the hall, hanging an art of topic exhibition or using the corridors for navigation and direction in maths.
 - Outside, children may learn about lifecycles from observing the creatures who share our site, they may collect natural materials and make their own dyes, they may plant and tend their own crops to learn about where their food comes from, or develop some practical bushcraft skills in our nature area.
- **At Forest School:**
 - Forest School is a child-centred learning process, providing children with hands-on experience in the natural environment.
 - Forest school focuses on developing communication and language skills as well as learning to co-operate and work as a team with their peers.
 - Each session has a learning objective which includes a new practical skill or knowledge about the natural world as well as free play and working as a team.
- **Local area:**
 - Children will learn performance skills through visits to many different local venues, which may include village churches, village halls, the Stag Theatre in Sevenoaks, The Space at Sevenoaks School.
 - Children make full use of the villages local to the schools and surrounding areas for geographical study and local history.
 - Inspiration for writing often involves taking children out to local venues to experience different settings and the wider environment.
 - The schools within the Federation are sharing their resources (Sundridge & Brasted have swimming lessons at Kemsing Primary School and use their field for the annual sports day event) and utilising the offer of resources, staff and students from Sevenoaks School.
 - The schools participate in a range of sporting events hosted by both Knole Academy and Sevenoaks School.
- **Visitors:**
 - Where practical and beneficial, visitors with particular areas of expertise and knowledge are invited to join the schools and share their interests with the children.
 - Often these visitors are able to bring a wide range of artefacts to share with the children, including hands-on exhibits, enabling many of the benefits of a trip out for a fraction of the cost.
 - Where possible we explore opportunities to share visitors with other local schools in order to lower costs.

Learning Outside the Classroom

- **Visits further afield:**
 - Staff are always looking for ways to bring the curriculum to life and sometimes the best way to do this is to visit a museum or venue where they are able to experience things first hand which they would not be able to do locally.
 - Examples of recent visits to support learning have been a visit to Kemsing Village, a trip to Sevenoaks Library and Museum, and a visit to the Natural History Museum.
- **Residential Trips:**
 - Residential experiences are currently planned for our year 6 children.

Strategies for Successful LOTC

- We constantly evaluate our own sites to see where areas might be better used or redeveloped to provide new opportunities.
- LOTC is planned into subjects across the curriculum.
- Timetabling is organized so that regular off-site visits are possible
- We aim to ensure there is continuity and progression of opportunities and challenge level across the school; we use an overview framework to facilitate this.
- We will continue to work to develop good partnerships with local providers such as the National Trust and other local historical properties, Bewl Water, local farms, churches and sacred spaces, theatres and outdoor study centres.
- We aim to make best use of in-house talent by asking parents to share areas of expertise or experience relating to LOTC when they join the school.

Practical Arrangements

Educational Visits Co-ordinator

- EVC for the Federation is Helen Prestage.
- EVC has overall responsibility for ensuring that trips and visits are carried out safely and are such that they add educational value to the children's school experience.
- EVC is responsible for overseeing all aspects of trips and visits, including
 - Approving each trip in principle before it is advertised to parents,
 - Ensuring that risk assessments and planning have been satisfactorily completed, prior to formally approving the trip
 - Ensuring that proposed staffing is sufficient in terms of number and experience,
 - Providing support and advice to other staff members planning trips
 - Over-seeing uploading of visits to EVOLVE (see below), especially residential and adventurous trips and those which go outside the County of Kent.

Learning Outside the Classroom

EVOLVE (Kent's online Visits Notification Approval system)

- All residential activities and adventurous activities need to be approved by KCC through EVOLVE.
- Trips of this nature to centres which have not been pre-approved, need to be uploaded for pre-approval a minimum of 12 weeks before departure.
- Trips of this nature which are to pre-approved centres need to be uploaded a minimum of 6 weeks before departure.
- Any day visit which leaves the county of Kent needs a notification placed on EVOLVE before departure and confirmation of acceptance in order for the trip to go ahead.

Staffing Levels for Visits and Activities

- The Federation recognises the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety of a school visit.
- The Federation is committed to encouraging and supporting all staff in developing their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning in a variety of environments through induction and training. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the approval process.
- The Federation will ensure that all volunteers are DBS checked prior to a visit if they are to be separated from the class teacher at any point.
- Staffing levels will follow at least national guidelines, but will be decided on the basis of the teacher's knowledge of the children involved. Additional staffing is necessary at times to ensure that trips are accessible by all children.
- When making staffing decisions, EVC will always ensure that the staff attending a trip have appropriate qualifications and levels of experience.

Planning a Visit

- Teachers planning a visit will initially complete a visit 'Application for Approval' Appendix A, which states the purpose and education objectives for the proposed visit, as well as basic practical details. This should be completed at least 4 weeks before the trip may go ahead. (Four weeks' notice not needed for local visits on foot.)
- Once this has been agreed by EVC, staff may go ahead with planning and risk assessing their trip. A trip checklist Appendix B is available to support this process and EVC is available for consultation and support.
- Details of any letters/emails home to parents should be passed to the school office so they can be written and approved by Executive Headteacher before going out to parents.
- All visits need to be risk assessed. This is necessarily a rigorous and thorough process, but should not be arduous. Only real risks, not encountered in the normal course of school life, need to be included.
- Risk assessments are completed using the school pro-forma (Appendix C) and should be with the Executive Headteacher one week prior to the trip to allow time for the checking process and any amendments necessary to be made.

Learning Outside the Classroom

Parental Permission

- Generic parental permission for local trips and visits will be sought at the start of each school year covering those where transport is on foot.
- For other trips and visits, parental permission and emergency care consent will be obtained as the need arises.

Costs

- To ensure that all children are able to participate, it is the schools policy never to exclude a child from a trip on the basis of cost, even where the visit is residential.
- To facilitate this, the Federation school will consider using a portion of its pupil premium funding or for Sundridge & Brasted, monies from the school's voluntary fund to help finance the trip.

Appendix A
The Darent Federation of Schools
Application for the Approval of Educational Visit by Headteacher



Group Leader:	Other Adults:
Purpose of Visit, special educational objectives and links with the curriculum	
Places to be visited and brief details of proposed activities	
Size and Composition of Group:	Adult to Pupil Ratio:
Age Range:	
Date of departure:	Date of return:
Time:	Time:
Transport arrangements:	Estimated cost per child:
Name of Transport Company:	
Insurance Arrangements – KCC	
Approved by Executive Headteacher	Date

APPENDIX B: Check List for Trip Organiser



	Date Completed	Comments
Initial Agreement of trip with Headteacher		
Pupil/adult ratio agreed with Headteacher		
Pre-trip visit completed		
Coach booked – insurance etc checked		
Centre/activities booked		
Risk Assessment signed by Headteacher		
EVOLVE agreement if overnight trip/adventurous activities		
EVOLVE notified if trip is out of county		
List of staff/parent helpers and mobile phone numbers given to office and each adult on trip		
Risk assessment shared with each adult on the trip		
List of groups and travel arrangements (minibus/car/parent) given to office and each adult on trip		
Schedule of activities given to each group leader		
Insurance/MOT of drivers checked		
Permissions checked/contact numbers		
Details of allergies/medication		
Medicine for children		
First Aid kit		
Return time left with school		
Ensure office knows about any school dinner requirements if applicable		

APPENDIX C

**The Darent Federation of Schools
Risk Assessment and Risk Management Record**



Location / Purpose:

Date of trip:

Identifying risk	Rating Low/Medium/High	Measures taken to reduce risk	Outcome Low/Medium/High
EVC / Headteacher approval:		Date:	