

# OCC Educational Visits service: Changes to policy & practice



**Mike Fawcett,  
Off-Site Visits Officer**

OCC endorses the value of educational visits and other learning outside the classroom activities which can offer the following benefits:

- Improved health and psychological wellbeing for students and staff
- Increased learning and attainment
- Cognitive, personal, emotional and social development
- Physical activity and wellbeing
- Increased creativity, attention and focus
- Increased engagement through applying learning in the 'real world'
- Increased awareness through connections with the natural world





## An introduction to your adviser

- An accredited and active member of the national panel of Outdoor Education Advisers since 2016
- Current regional OEAP chair and member of the National Board
- A former Deputy Head Teacher and experienced EVC and Visit Leader
- 12 years management experience gained in children's residential outdoor education centres
- A qualified Outdoor Activities instructor, coach and leader with qualifications and expertise in a broad range of Mountain, Cave and Paddlesport activities
- A qualified Flood and Swift Water Rescue Technician
- Emergency response experience as a full member of Longtown Mountain Rescue Team





# Context to the changes

OCC has statutory obligations regarding the health and safety of staff and students from maintained schools on Educational Visits.

A number of changes to policy and practice have been agreed that will:

- Enhance the advice and guidance package for those schools.
- Offer greater resilience in case of a Visit Emergency.
- Streamline the educational visits planning process for schools with easy reference to OEAP National Guidance and Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge benchmarks.
- Increase OCC's depth of monitoring of 'enhanced risk' visits by OCC schools.
- Enable a greater depth and breadth of monitoring, more efficient / reliable recording and a range of evaluation reports to be prepared.
- Deliver schools a comprehensive web-based planning portal and bring OCC in-line with the majority of local authorities
- Provide the option to non-maintained schools to 'buy-in' to the above service.



## **Summary of changes to the OCC Educational Visits policy**

- The policy applies to Community, Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools and other Children's Services establishments.
- The policy changes apply to schools for children from Reception to Key Stage 5.
- The policy does apply to Duke of Edinburgh expeditions - the previous exemption has been removed.
- The policy makes explicit the external benchmarks that can be used to complete diligence checks of safety and quality.
- The eVisit 2.0 planning portal has been introduced and visit plans must be submitted on the new system from April 2025.



## Impact of changes on non-maintained schools

Academies and Academy Trusts must ensure they have their own policies and processes in place to meet their obligations as employers (Health and Safety at Work Act, 1974).

Academies are recommended to:

- Adopt OEAP National Guidance.
- Appoint appropriately trained people  
e.g. Educational Visits Co-ordinator.
- Operate approval processes with appropriate reference to an external competent person (e.g. Accredited member of OEAP) for 'enhanced risk' visits.

OCC continues to offer EVC training and re-validation courses and now offers a new Educational Visits traded service to enable non-maintained schools to adopt appropriate policies and processes.



# What does the new service comprise?

Access to the new EV2 eVisit planning portal with full technical and administrative support

Credible and timely advice, support and guidance from a nationally-accredited adviser with high level experience in the field of Educational Visits

Thorough scrutiny of visit plans - review, feedback and endorsement of Category C (enhanced risk) visits with reference to OEAP National Guidance

One-to-one advice for school SLT members and EVCs via MS Teams, phone, email and planning portal

Visit-related inclusion advice based on current best practice and a range of case studies

Access to the Visit Emergency Support Network (VESN) - 24 hour critical incident support from a team of 5 experienced advisers

Review and feedback on your Educational Visits policy

National updates to schools through EVC newsletters and broadcast messages

Professional representation through the Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP)



# Approval and Notification of Activities and Visits

## **Under the revised policy:**

- OCC delegates the responsibility for formal approval of category A and B visits to the Heads and Managers of Community, Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided schools and other Children's Services establishments. It is a requirement of this policy that Heads and Managers carry out this function in accordance with OEAP National Guidance.
- Category C visits must also be endorsed by OCC's Off Site Visits Officer (Residential, International, Adventurous or using water outdoors)
- From April 2025 all Category C visit plans for maintained schools should be prepared on the eVisit 2.0 visit planning portal, approved through school processes and submitted to the Off Site Visits Officer for review 4 weeks prior to the visit.





# Introducing eVisit 2.0

**eVisit**  
Planning  
Oxfordshire County Council

MF Mike Fawcett

+ Create new visit

- Visits
- Messages
- Calendar
- Document Library
- Reports
- Administration
- Training Hub

Logout

## Hill End OEC

Home / Visits / Visit Details

Establishment

OCC Test School

Last updated

08/12/2024 11:58:38

Status

Draft

Visit Id

# 1



Summary

Visit Form

Approval

Comments

Consent

History



## Hill End OEC

Unknown visit location



Draft

Visit Leader

Not set

Staff members

No additional staff

???

?

No dates currently set

Cookies, Privacy and Terms of use





# eVisit 2.0 roll-out plan

## Maintained schools

14 schools completed eVisit pilot training – Dec 24

16 schools will complete pilot training next week

64 training places available in March

<https://educationservices.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Remaining schools will be offered training in April

## Non-maintained schools

An eVisit demonstration and presentation can be booked with [mike.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mike.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

OCC Educational Visits service will be on offer as a traded service for Academic Year 2025/26

<https://educationservices.oxfordshire.gov.uk/>

Training will be offered in the summer term





[mike.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:mike.fawcett@oxfordshire.gov.uk)

**Any  
questions?**