



HIDELOW GRANGE SCHOOL

Education Policy

Educational Visits Policy

Approved by:	B. Neasom, Headteacher
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Policy author (CareTech):	Laura Dickie / Tonia Lewis
Policy approver (CareTech):	Jo Dunn, Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director
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Headteacher
B. Neasom
 Headteacher & DSL

Deputy Headteacher
J. Smith
 Deputy Headteacher & DDSL

Regional Lead
R. McConomy
 CareTech Regional Lead

1. Local site profile

Hidelow Grange School is an independent SEMH day school located in Acton Beauchamp, Herefordshire (URN 144717). We operate under CareTech Community Services Ltd and educate young people aged 7–16 with social, emotional and mental health needs. Our small class sizes, high staffing ratios and therapeutic ethos mean that educational visits are planned carefully to maximise their educational value whilst reflecting the individual needs, risk profiles and care plans of all pupils. Many of our pupils are looked-after children and all visits are planned in close collaboration with placing authorities, social workers and, where appropriate, carers. The school motto — Reflect, Believe, Develop, Achieve — reflects the spirit in which all off-site learning is approached.

2. Policy statement

Educational visits at Hidelow Grange School are a meaningful part of how pupils experience and make sense of the world. Whether engaging with local community resources, natural environments or specialist facilities, visits deepen curriculum intent, strengthen personal development and contribute to pupil confidence, independence and cultural capital.

This policy sets out a clear, proportionate framework for planning, approving, delivering and reviewing visits. It ensures that every experience is safe, inclusive, legally compliant and educationally purposeful.

3. Purpose

This policy applies to Hidelow Grange School and sets out our approach to educational visits for all pupils.

It establishes expectations for:

- Teaching staff and the wider staff team involved in off-site provision
- Senior leaders and the governing body or proprietor
- Pupils
- Visitors, volunteers and contractors where relevant

It enables Hidelow Grange School to:

- Meet national statutory duties
- Uphold safeguarding responsibilities
- Comply with data protection requirements
- Maintain well-governed, high-quality provision that strengthens curriculum intent, personal development and pupil experience

4. Scope

This policy applies across all school functions and covers:

- All whole-school and group off-site activities, including clubs, enrichment activities and off-site learning
- Pupils under and over 18 years
- All activities beyond the normal school base, during and outside normal school hours

Each visit is implemented in line with the statutory and regulatory requirements for England, as set out in Appendix A.

5. Legal and regulatory context

Hidelow Grange School operates within the statutory duties, safeguarding requirements and inspection arrangements applicable to independent special schools in England. The standards in this policy are enacted in line with the legal and regulatory framework set out in Appendix A.

6. Policy principles

- Visits must have clear aims and objectives linked to curriculum and wellbeing
- Provision must promote inclusion and equal opportunities
- Visits must be planned, risk assessed, approved, delivered and monitored proportionately

7. Responsibilities

Sites must:

- Conduct risk assessments, including medical and needs-based considerations
- Ensure supervision ratios and appropriate vetting checks
- Prepare emergency procedures, first aid and communications
- Plan transport and insurance arrangements

- Communicate with parents, carers, placing authorities and social workers, and obtain written consent for higher-risk, residential, out-of-hours and overseas activities
- Appoint a competent Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)
- Follow safeguarding protocols for pupils under and over 18

7.1 Safeguarding and behaviour

- Set clear expectations for pupil conduct and safety
- Ensure arrangements for emergency medical treatment if parents or carers cannot be contacted

7.2 Equal opportunities and inclusion

- Activities must be accessible to all pupils, with reasonable adjustments for SEND
- Risk assessments must align with our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy

8. Inclusion, accessibility and learning outside the classroom

We plan for participation by default. No pupil is excluded on the basis of need; we make reasonable adjustments to prevent discrimination under equality legislation.

- Staffing ratios are never lower than in-school ratios and may be increased to meet needs or the complexity of an activity, for example 2:1 for specific risks
- Adults assigned to individual care do not count towards overall group ratios
- Decisions about ratios and adjustments are made collaboratively with pupils, parents or carers, group leaders, the education team and multi-agency partners
- Risk assessments cover both the whole visit and individual inclusion needs, including aids, equipment and arrangements agreed with parents or carers, staff, venue managers and operators
- Staff receive training to manage risks and communicate plans clearly to pupils and their networks
- Risk management is enabling: we address real risks, not trivial ones; paperwork is proportionate and practical

Given the SEMH needs of our pupils, additional pre-visit preparation is standard practice. This may include visual timetables, social stories, familiarisation visits and bespoke risk assessments linked to individual Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and care plans.

9. Risk management

Risk assessment is a legal requirement under health and safety legislation. Its purpose is to enable safe participation by identifying hazards, planning sensible controls and clarifying responsibilities.

Types of assessment

- Generic – for common, repeated activities
- Visit- or site-specific – for the particular location, group and activity
- Ongoing or dynamic – real-time professional judgement during the visit

Risk assessments consider: type of visit; location; season and weather; transport; staff competence and ratios; first aid capacity; pupil age and maturity; medical, sensory and behavioural needs; emergency procedures; insurance; external provider competence; data protection; safeguarding; and current national threat level.

9.1 Pre-visit checks

Thorough research of venues and providers is required. Pre-visits are strongly recommended for complex or higher-risk activities, including residentials and adventure activities led by school staff.

Recognised assurance routes include the LOtC Quality Badge, AALA licence, Adventuremark, School Travel Forum membership and relevant National Governing Body approvals.

9.2 Written assessments

Written risk assessments are required for significant risks such as climbing, caving, water-based activities and remote terrain. They are not required for routine, low-risk local visits where generic controls are in place. Staff follow the Risk Assessment and Management Care Practice Policy and the Health and Safety Policy for the full risk assessment and management framework.

Risk assessments are submitted to the EVC and approved by the Headteacher before any visit proceeds.

10. Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher

- Holds overall accountability for visit safety and quality
- Ensures policy compliance, staff competence, supervision sufficiency and safeguarding
- Approves all visits; ensures the school remains operational during staff absence on visits

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

The EVC role is held by the Deputy Headteacher, J. Smith.

- Maintains the annual visits plan and monitors compliance
- Supports group leaders with planning, training and evaluation
- Confirms that behaviour policies apply off-site
- Verifies risk assessments, consent, insurance, travel arrangements and emergency contacts

Group leader (visit leader)

- Holds overall responsibility for planning, supervision, conduct and dynamic risk management
- Allocates roles and briefings; confirms emergency procedures and contingencies
- Carries essential documentation including participant lists, contacts, medical needs and visit plans

Staff team

- Follow training and instructions; exercise ongoing professional judgement
- Stop or adapt activities where risks become unacceptable
- Manage conflicts of interest

Administrative functions

- Check staff and volunteer qualifications and vetting status
- Track completion of risk assessments and consents
- Coordinate information for parents, carers and placing authorities

Volunteers and responsible adults

- Support delivery under staff direction; do not operate in sole charge
- For residentials, complete appropriate vetting in line with the safeguarding policy

Parents, carers, social workers and placing authorities

- Receive clear information in advance including dates, itinerary, supervision arrangements and expectations
- Provide accurate health and medical information; consent to emergency treatment where lawful

- Social workers and placing authorities are notified of residentials and overseas trips in line with care plan requirements

Pupils

- Participate in planning where appropriate; follow safety briefings and agreed boundaries
- Adhere to the school code of conduct on and off-site
- Report hazards or concerns to a staff member immediately

11. Staffing, supervision and ratios

- Ratios reflect the activity, environment and individual pupil needs, and are always equal to or more generous than in-school ratios
- Minimum expectation: two adults per off-site group; mixed-gender supervision for residential visits
- Non-direct supervision is only permitted in clearly defined areas with agreed rules, check-in points and emergency contacts; pupils remain in groups of at least three

Given the needs of Hidelow Grange pupils, ratios are typically higher than the minimum and are confirmed for each visit in the risk assessment and EVC sign-off.

12. Consent and communication

- Routine, low-risk activities during normal hours: no individual written consent required where covered by the school's general consent
- Written consent is required for higher-risk activities, out-of-hours, residential and overseas visits
- Placing authorities and social workers are notified of all off-site activities involving looked-after children
- For pupils over 18, consent is obtained in line with capacity and legal requirements
- Parents and carers may withdraw consent at any time

13. Transport

- Approved taxis, minibuses and coaches are used, with appropriate driver checks and seatbelts where required
- Safety briefings are provided before travel; seatbelts are worn at all times
- School minibus drivers complete approved training; journeys include rest breaks; first-aid kits are carried
- Vehicles for nine or more passengers comply with licensing requirements

Transport arrangements are confirmed in writing in the visit plan and approved by the EVC.

14. Providers, tour operators and assurance

- For packaged or adventurous provision, the EVC reviews the provider's Safety Management System and independent assurance
- Providers must supply insurance documents and instructor qualifications on request
- Only providers with externally verified safety systems are used; accommodation must be recognised and appropriate
- No host family arrangements are used without full safeguarding checks

15. Adventurous activities

- Led by qualified, competent instructors and usually delivered at licensed or approved centres
- Parents, carers and placing authorities are informed in writing of adventurous activities and associated controls
- Where delivered by school staff, technical competence is verified and recorded
- Risk assessments are undertaken and approved in line with the Risk Assessment and Management Care Practice Policy and the Health and Safety Policy

16. First aid and medical

- At least one staff member holds an appropriate emergency first aid qualification on every visit
- The group leader ensures a complete first-aid kit is available and accessible
- Individual health plans and emergency medication are carried as required
- Overseas visits plan for access to medical care and carry relevant health documentation

Staff follow the Administration of Medication Policy for full details on the storage and administration of medication, emergency health plans and access to clinical advice.

17. Safeguarding and conduct

- The school safeguarding policy applies at all times off-site
- The DSL or a named deputy is identified as the safeguarding contact for each visit
- Any concern, allegation or suspicion of abuse is reported to the DSL immediately, following the policy for pupils under and over 18
- Behaviour expectations mirror in-school standards; persistent or serious breaches may result in a pupil being excluded from a visit following a risk-based decision and communication with parents, carers and placing authorities
- Mobile phones and cameras provided by the school are used for educational purposes only; staff mobile phone use follows the school's mobile phone policy

18. Emergency procedures and communications

- All staff understand emergency procedures and act with a common-law duty of care
- The group leader maintains communication with school at all times during the visit
- Two designated points of contact are identified for all overnight or residential stays
- Emergency protocols cover serious incident response, missing pupil, medical evacuation, media handling and liaison with the police and other authorities
- Plans take account of the current national threat level and local intelligence

Emergency contact for the school: the main school telephone number is the primary contact. The Headteacher holds a school mobile phone. For overnight visits, the EVC holds a 24-hour emergency number.

19. Collection, dismissal and early return

- The group leader ensures safe dismissal and return at the end of every visit
- If return arrangements break down, school contacts home and the placing authority immediately; the pupil remains in staff care until resolved
- Early return protocols and cost implications where applicable are communicated to parents, carers and social workers in advance

20. Information for parents, carers and social workers

Parents, carers, social workers and placing authorities receive timely written details regarding:

- Dates, times, travel arrangements and destination
- Group leader name and level of supervision provided
- Purpose, activities and any associated costs
- Consent requirements
- Alternative plans for adverse conditions
- Clothing and footwear guidance
- Behaviour expectations and the possibility of exclusion for misconduct

Briefing sessions are arranged for longer trips. Social workers receive direct communication for all visits involving looked-after children.

21. Oversubscription and selection

- Where places are limited, selection is by random draw and a waiting list is maintained
- Residential priority may be given to pupils who have not previously attended
- The Headteacher appoints staff based on experience and operational need

22. Insurance

- The employer provides Public Liability insurance and cover suitable for off-site activities, extending to employees and volunteers acting under school direction
- For residential and overseas visits, travel insurance arrangements are confirmed and communicated in advance

23. Records, documentation and data protection

- Required documents including risk assessments, registers, consents, medical plans, insurance and emergency plans are retained in line with data protection and retention schedules
- A full visit evaluation and file archive are completed within one week of return
- Records are typically retained for a minimum of three years, or longer where required

Staff follow the Records Management Policy for further details.

24. Pupils related to staff

- Staff bringing their own dependants must avoid conflicts of interest
- They are not counted in supervision ratios unless supervising a group that does not include their own dependant

25. Evaluation, learning and quality assurance

- Each visit includes a reflective review of educational impact, inclusion, logistics and risk management
- Findings inform future planning and contribute to whole-school learning
- The EVC and SLT carry out periodic sampling and audits to test compliance and impact

26. Complaints and concerns

- Concerns are addressed promptly with the provider and managed under the school's complaints procedure

- Serious incidents are escalated through safeguarding, health and safety and governance routes

Full pathways are outlined in the Complaints Policy, Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, and Health and Safety Policy.

27. Equality impact statement

This policy has been developed to promote equality, safeguard individuals' rights, and ensure fair and inclusive practice. The potential impact on pupils, families and staff with protected characteristics has been considered in line with the Equality Act 2010. No negative impacts have been identified. Staff must apply this policy with sensitivity to individual need and make reasonable adjustments to ensure equitable access, safety, wellbeing and participation for every pupil. Any emerging risks of differential impact should be reported and addressed through on-going review and quality assurance.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored on an ongoing basis through the school's governance and quality assurance systems. Responsibility for ensuring the policy remains compliant with legislation and regulatory frameworks sits with the Headteacher and Regional Lead.

A formal review will be undertaken no later than three years from the date of approval, or sooner if changes in legislation, regulatory guidance or operational requirements necessitate it.

This policy was approved by Jo Dunn (Compliance, Regulation and Quality Director, CareTech) in February 2026 and authored by Laura Dickie and Tonia Lewis. It was adopted and locally adapted for Hidelow Grange School in June 2026 by B. Neasom (Headteacher).

Next review: February 2029.

Appendix A — Legal and regulatory framework (England)

As an independent SEMH day school in England, Hidelow Grange School operates within the following legislative and regulatory framework for educational visits.

Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974	The core UK health and safety law placing general duties on employers to protect employees and others affected by work, including off-site activities. All visits are treated as workplace activities under HSWA.
Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999	Sets the framework for suitable and sufficient risk assessment, planning, competence, emergency procedures and young persons. Every visit pack evidences the three-layer risk approach (generic, site-specific, dynamic) and named competent visit leaders.
DfE: Health and safety on educational visits	National guidance for schools on planning, approval, consent, using providers, adventurous activities and proportionate paperwork. We adopt this guidance and embed it in our visit workflow and templates.
Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004	Statutory licensing for providers selling caving, climbing, trekking or water sports to under-18s. We only use licensed or assured providers for in-scope activities and document where licensing is not required.
Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025	Statutory safeguarding guidance setting culture, DSL roles, safer recruitment and off-site safeguarding expectations. All visit packs include DSL sign-off for safeguarding risks.
Prevent Duty Guidance 2023	Statutory duty to have due regard to preventing people being drawn into terrorism. Prevent risk is included in visit risk assessments and staff briefings, with escalation to the DSL as needed.
Equality Act 2010	Requires reasonable adjustments so learners with SEND are not disadvantaged by off-site activities. Inclusion is planned by default with adjustments recorded and agreed with families.
Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014	Regulatory standards for independent schools covering welfare, health and safety (Part 3), premises (Part 5) and leadership (Part 8). Visit procedures are mapped to ISS compliance.
Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) 2025	National inspection framework covering safeguarding, behaviour, personal development and quality of education. Visit evaluations feed the SEF; the EVC quality-assures sampling against EIF expectations.
First aid in schools, early years and further education (DfE)	Guidance on first aid planning on premises and off-site. Every visit names trained first-aider(s), kit location and emergency hospital route.