



# Educational Visits & Journeys



## NEWSLETTER

### Autumn 2012

## Contacts

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Pete is responsible for providing advice, support and training as well as approving all visits that require LA approval.

### [Celia Dawson \(Senior Administrator to Compliance & Risk Adviser\)](#)

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Celia is available for day to day enquiries and support. She will guide you through the EVOLVE online system if you need help. Celia is also the main contact if you would like to book onto any training.

### [Jolyon Evans](#)

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Jolyon is the Duke of Edinburgh Award Development Officer for Bedfordshire. He is the main point of contact for queries and advice relating to D of E expeditions and training.

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Please note, all visits **MUST** be submitted for approval **4 WEEKS** before the visit date.

Compliance with this is vital to ensure that you have the necessary approval before a visit takes place. If you proceed with a visit that does not have approval, your school will not be covered in the event of an accident. Therefore it is imperative that the completion of a visit form is a top priority for every visit.

**PLEASE  
DISPLAY THIS  
NEWSLETTER  
IN YOUR  
STAFF ROOM**

# Central Beds Council EVJ Policy Update

As promised in last year's EVJ Newsletter, the CBC Visits Policy has now been updated to reflect current national advice and legislation and a hard copy of each policy has been sent to each school for reference. Ideally, the policy should be used **electronically** and for this purpose a PDF version is available via the Resource section of EVOLVE for staff to download. You are also able to find updated versions of most existing appendices together with some new additions. **Be aware that the appendix list has been rationalised and now appears in a different order.** To avoid any confusion, the 'old' policy and appendices will remain on EVOLVE for an overlap period until staff become accustomed to the new policy.

The main advantage of using the policy electronically is the ability to 'drill down' for more detailed information where required using the hyperlinks provided. These mainly link to the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel (OEAP) National Guidance but also to Health and Safety Executive and various National Governing Bodies.

The additional advantage of accessing national information in this way is the assurance that you are working from the most current advice and legislation available.

Over the next few weeks a number of twilight sessions have been planned to introduce the new policy to EVCs who will then cascade information and advice to their respective school staff. Staff who have previously attended either EVC or Group Leader Training in the Summer Term will have already been introduced to the policy.

Twilight Update sessions have been arranged for:

Date	Time	Location
Tuesday 11th September	16:00-18:00	Redborne Upper School, Ampthill
Thursday 13th September	16:30-18:30	Manshead Upper School, Caddington
Tuesday 18th September	16:00-18:00	Vandyke Upper School, Leighton Buzzard
Thursday 20th September	16:00-18:00	Sandy Upper School, Sandy

For more information or to book onto a session please contact Celia Dawson.

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## National Updates

In July 2011, the Coalition Government announced plans to repeal the Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (HASPEV) guidance. This coincided with the release of a paper entitled 'Health and Safety – Advice on Legal Duties and Powers which provides guidance for school on all Health and Safety matters including visits and journeys. (An updated version of this document was released in February 2012)

The standards required by HASPEV are still widely regarded as best practice and underpin the Outdoor Education Advisors Panel 'National Guidance' which has now been adopted as the basis for policy by 30 Local Authorities across the country (including Central Bedfordshire) and has

received endorsement from the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT). The OEAP National Guidance has also been welcomed by most teaching unions and in January 2012, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) released a paper entitled School Visits: NUT HEALTH & SAFETY BRIEFING. This document references all changes afoot nationally and offers sound advice to teachers who intend to run school visits. This is a must-read for anyone who is uncertain of their responsibility / liability with regard to planning and leading school visits.

Proposals to abolish the Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) and replace it with a voluntary code of conduct were also announced in July 2011. (AALA was formed in a direct response to the Lyme Bay tragedy in 1993 and is responsible for quality assuring all establishments providing Adventurous Activities to young people). In June 2012, it was announced that this decision was to be 'put on hold pending further consultation'.

All documents mentioned are available via the EVOLVE Resource section.

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## Training Update

The following Training courses are scheduled for the Autumn Term:

Course Description	Date and Time	Location
EVC Training for New EVCs	Tues 25 <sup>th</sup> September 08:45-16:00	Forest Centre, Marston Vale
Group Leader Training	Tues 9 <sup>th</sup> October 08:45-16:00	Forest Centre, Marston Vale

The cost for either course is £70 per delegate for local authority schools and £120 for academy schools who have not bought back Evolve.

For more information, please refer to the 'Training' page of EVOLVE or contact Celia Dawson.

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## EVOLVE Step by Step Guide

If you find the prospect of logging into EVOLVE daunting, a step by step guide, including screen shots, has been prepared to show you how to:

- log on
- retrieve messages
- edit your profile
- access CBC and national resources
- create and submit a visit
- track the approval of your visit
- evaluate your visit

The guide can be found in the Resources section under the 'Evolve Starter Guides' tab.

# Visits Statistical Report for Academic Year: 1st Sept. 2011 – 31st Aug. 2012

Once again the number of visits conducted by schools in Central Bedfordshire shows an annual increase in numbers. This is testimony to the hard work and dedication of our teachers and support assistants and to the value they place in providing learning experiences outside of the classroom.

All of the following statistics have been generated through the reporting function of EVOLVE. Please do not forget that it is there – you can generate a statistical summary for your own school which many Headteachers are finding useful when compiling reports to Governors etc.

School Phase	Total no. Visits	Total no. Participants
Upper Schools	755	18,950
Middle Schools	1,190	47,082
Special Schools	2,318	16,746
Lower Schools	1,183	43,787
Integrated Youth Service Support	19	197
Children In Care	6	53
<b>Total ( all phases)</b>	<b>5,451</b>	<b>125,972</b>

## Breakdown by Visit Type

	Overseas	Residential	Adventurous (external)	Adventurous (own staff)	Other
<b>Total number of visits that included Visit Type</b>	79	218	522	277	4,615
<b>Total number of different establishments</b>	32	80	84	26	110

### Notes:

- 'Other' refers to the vast majority of visits, fixtures, local fieldwork etc.
- Sixteen different countries have been visited by schools from Central Bedfordshire in the last year: Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Kenya, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, USA, South Africa, India, Malaysia and Singapore.
- The use of EVOLVE in Lower Schools continues to develop with nearly 200 more visits recorded this year and a greater use for visits other than residential, overseas or adventurous.
- Samuel Whitbread has recorded the highest number of visits for an Upper School, 144 in total.
- Mill Vale Middle has the highest number of visits for a Middle School, 162.
- St. Swithun's has the most visits recorded for a Lower School, 83.
- Ivel Valley recorded 958 visits last year, the highest for a Special School.

# Blue Peris Mountain Centre – North Wales

## (Article by Mark Richards – Centre Manager)

Blue Peris Mountain Centre has been part of the life of Bedfordshire school children for over 35 years. This is something we are immensely proud of. We have a long track record of providing high quality, safe and adventurous residential Outdoor Education courses for many Central Bedfordshire schools. Our Mission Statement is:

***“To develop confidence and an awareness of self, others and the world around us through positive learning experiences in a new and challenging environment”***

### **Our Courses**

We plan our courses in consultation with school staff and endeavour to provide an experience that is tailored to the aims, objectives and learning goals of the visiting school. We make the experiences for children real, by using the true outdoor environment of North Wales. We offer a vast array of adventurous, challenging and 'real' outdoor activities. With over 30 to choose from pupils gain confidence by taking on genuine, rather than manufactured challenges. This is at the heart of focused outdoor education/adventure.

Have you thought about GCSE or A level hill walking or rock climbing? How about formally addressing some Key Skills or an alternative way of addressing your Citizenship or PSHE curriculum.... A Blue Peris course could achieve lots of things for your students you'd never thought of.... Just ask and we'll come up with a course!

### **Nationally recognised High Quality Provision**

Blue Peris holds the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge (LOTC) and the National Association of Heads Outdoor Centres Gold Standard badge (AHOEC). These two awards demonstrate the quality and safety of a visit to the centre. We are only one of a few centres to hold both awards. In addition to this, we hold an AALA licence and are accredited by Canoe Wales.

### **Summer frenzy**

Demand for summer weeks at the centre has meant that schools have not always been able to come and get the Blue Peris experience in the summer (it doesn't always rain in N Wales!). However, some years ago we solved that issue; we can now accommodate groups up to 38 (including staff) in another accommodation block. The Old School Lodge is a 5 minutes drive from the centre and the experience for the students is just the same as in Blue Peris but in a slightly different place!

### **Refurbishment**

Over the last 4 years there have been many changes made to the facilities. This has been possible due to help from the authority, our customers, Harpur Trust and The Big Lottery Fund. They include: classroom facilities, an IT suite, new Games room, new climbing wall, our "Pavilion", full dormitory refurbishments, car park, large social room, staff room and dining room.

## **White Peris (Fully Refurbished 2011) Ideal for Smaller Courses - Families- Self Catering**

Our small annex, sleeping a total of 13 can be used in a variety of ways. It is ideal as a base for those wishing to bring a small group (up to 13). In addition to this, it can be used as a hostel/bunkhouse, for any type of group including families from 1 night upwards. You can choose self-catering, fully/part catered, also activities on a daily basis or for longer stays.

### **Not just for children**

We can run programmes to suit teachers' requirements or why not join us on our teacher only courses in the autumn. These provide much fun as teachers have the opportunity to mix adventure and Blue Peris without any children.

### **Bedfordshire Outdoor Adventure**

Were you aware that Kempston Outdoor Centre and Blue Peris are part of Bedfordshire Outdoor Adventure? This body was formed in 2010 and its purpose is to support all residents within Bedfordshire and to give them unique learning and life opportunities that no other organisation within the authority is able to provide.

### **How much does it cost?**

The centre has a set range of course and price bands throughout the year. However, many of our clients often require specific courses and dates. Therefore we provide many bespoke course throughout the year. By contacting the centre we can discuss your requirements and quote accordingly.

### **School visit**

The Centre Manager, Mark Richards, is often visiting Bedford and will come and visit personally if you would like to discuss a course or find out more about the centre.

### **Wish to find out more about Blue Peris?**

- Phone or email for our colour brochure
- Speak in person to Mark Richards or Karen Williams
- Visit our website

E-mail: [mail@blueperis.co.uk](mailto:mail@blueperis.co.uk)

Web: [www.blueperis.co.uk](http://www.blueperis.co.uk)

Phone or Fax: 01286 870853

# Kempston Outdoor Centre

## (Article by Steven Pease – Centre Manager)

Kempston Outdoor Centre offers a range of options for school trips and visits for both education and recreation, from ages 7 upwards.

The centre holds both an Adventure Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) license and a Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTC) badge. This means we show on paper and in practice to be consistently safe as educational practitioners of outdoor adventurous activities. This makes submitting your visit to your school's EVC an easier process as less paperwork is required! We strive for excellence on every course we deliver so you can expect the highest standard of quality instruction available.

We are ideally set up for day visits, where students and teachers can experience up to 4 different activities. When that just isn't enough we have a dedicated residential centre close by where up to 30 people can stay in a purpose built facility, and extend your adventure over 2 or more days.

Most school groups enjoy our school-day package, a 9:30-3:00pm programme of three activities for up to 60 people. We design each visit around your group's learning objectives and encourage you to choose activities with your classes through discussions about risk management & collaborative working. We call this 'Challenge by Choice' and it's a fantastic way of expanding a young person's comfort zone, starting the process before you even arrive here. We can include a debrief as part of your day or you could plan your own reflective lesson within school.

### Courses

We also provide GCSE & BTEC courses to PE exam board specifications - perfect for those students wanting to engage with something different. We run clubs for both climbing and paddlesport after school providing perfect opportunities to practice for their assessment in their own time, at minimal cost.

Contact us to discuss your requirements:

Phone: 01234 718666

E-mail: [KempstonOutdoorCentre@bedford.gov.uk](mailto:KempstonOutdoorCentre@bedford.gov.uk)

Web: [www.kempstonoutdoorcentre.co.uk](http://www.kempstonoutdoorcentre.co.uk)

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## Notes for EVCs / Headteachers fulfilling EVC Role

### ALL Staff on Evolve

With the new school year upon us, please take the time to ensure ALL staff are set up on the system and that all details (**including a current email address**) and any relevant qualifications / awards are complete. A current e-mail address is needed to receive alerts from the EVOLVE system in relation to the approval process of any visit you have submitted. It also enables LA staff to make contact more efficiently. Please also **disable**<sup>1</sup> any staff accounts where staff have now left

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<sup>1</sup> If a staff account has any history attached it can be disabled but not deleted. This is for future audit purposes

the school - let us know if you need advice on this. We strongly advise that all default logins are changed to something specific to the individual using it, this way it is more memorable.

### **Checking Visits**

Before approving visits, can you check that the following paperwork has not been omitted :

- An itinerary that includes travel time. (This might be needed in an emergency)
- A 'Duty of Care' Risk Assessment for a residential visit. School staff have 24/7 duty of care and should plan for:
  - transitional periods between centre led activity
  - downtime
  - security of accommodation
  - sleeping arrangements / pupil access to school staff in an emergency
  - children with specific needs that falls outside of a generic risk assessment

### **Tracking Visits**

Please ensure that once you have submitted a visit form for approval, you continue to track its progress until you receive an email notification to confirm that your visit has been approved. This will help ensure that forms are completed correctly and in plenty of time for the visit. We often put notes on the form for you to respond to before approval is given and these sometimes go unanswered which then requires us to chase by phone. Please help us to keep this to a minimum by regularly checking if you have had an email alert.

### **Evaluating Visits**

You will receive an alert when your visits need to be evaluated. The Group Leader should then go onto the system and evaluate their completed visit using the 'smiley face' icons.

### **Establishment Documents**

EVCs and Heads are able to post documents on EVOLVE via their own 'establishment dashboard' (Icon on right). These documents are accessible by all staff from that school only via the resources section. If your school has developed generic risk assessments / operating procedures these can be stored here and are easily accessed by staff in or out of school via the internet.



### **Evolve Gateway**



This is a really useful function that allows the Group Leader to communicate with parents before and during a visit. If you wish to use the gateway please log onto Evolve and click on the "help" section for instructions.

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## **.....And Finally**

The value of school visits as an effective teaching and learning strategy is clearly recognised in all phases of Central Bedfordshire schools and the number of recorded visits has gone from strength to strength. We would like this situation to remain and are here to support you to help ensure the continued planning and smooth running of school visits. If you have any visit related queries, please do not hesitate to pick up the phone or drop us an e-mail.

Have an enjoyable and successful year.

Pete Hardy  
Celia Dawson