



# Educational Visits & Journeys

## NEWSLETTER

### Autumn 2013



## 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 DofE 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**

# Local Updates

## Schools' Portal

Supporting resources and documentation continue to be available from the 'Resources' section of EVOLVE. However, to improve teacher accessibility to important information relating to visits, a dedicated page has been created on the **Schools Portal**.

<http://www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schools-portal/human-resources/educational-visits.aspx>

Information relating to policy and training together with links to national websites can be found on this page.

## EVC Administrator

In January 2013, a new function was introduced to EVOLVE. It is now possible to designate a member of staff as an **EVC Administrator**. This role requires no training because EVC Administrators are unable to approve visits. They can however track visits, upload documents, amend profiles, upload establishment documents and generally look after the 'housekeeping'. This role is usually carried out by a member of the school administrative team and guidance in the use of EVOLVE provided through the 'EVC Essentials' booklet (see 'Evolve Guides' section of this newsletter)

## Emergency Planning for School Visits

In February 2013, a new guidance document was issued to Central Bedfordshire schools concerning emergencies arising during school visits. '**Emergency Planning for School Visits**' was written as a result of lessons learnt from a coach crash in Austria involving a party from Alvechurch Middle School in Worcestershire. This guidance document includes the most recent advice in addition to training materials that can be used in school.

'Emergency Planning for School Visits' is available as a download from the Resources section of EVOLVE or from the Educational Visits section of the School Portal. All training courses have been updated to include the most recent advice for dealing appropriately with incidents arising from a school visit.

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# National Updates

## National Guidance

The Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (OEAP) 'National Guidance' resource has rapidly become the single point of reference for advice and guidance relating to best practice and legislation in respect of the planning, administration and conducting of educational visits. It continues to receive acclaim from numerous professional bodies and has received formal endorsements from the National Association of Head Teachers, the National Union of Teachers, the Health and Safety Executive, the Association of Teachers and Lecturers and the Field Studies Council. It has also been formally adopted by 45 local authorities and 6 academy trusts.

The National Guidance resource underpins the Central Bedfordshire Educational Visits Policy and can be accessed via EVOLVE or via the Schools' Portal.

## Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority

Proposals to abolish the Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (AALA) and replace it with a voluntary code of conduct were announced in July 2011. (AALA was formed in a direct response to the Lyme Bay tragedy in 1993. It 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'. To date there has been no change to this position.

## DfE Minibus Guidance

In August, the Department for Education, Department for Transport and the Association of Chief Police Officers jointly released 'Driving school minibuses'. This document represents non-statutory, non-legal advice to schools and their employees. It draws on a number of existing sources of information and attempts to de-mystify associated legislation and advice. It is not anticipated that advice and guidance issued by Central Bedfordshire Council to its schools will be altered as a result of this document.

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## Training Update

The following Training courses are scheduled for this Academic Year:

Course Description	Date and Time	Cost
EVC Training for New EVCs	Tues 24 <sup>th</sup> September 2013 08:45-16:00	Local Authority Schools £70 Academies buying back EVJ Service £70 All other academies £120
Group Leader Training	Tues 8 <sup>th</sup> October 2013 08:45-16:00	£70 – Local Authority Schools £70 – Academies buying back EVJ Service £120 – All other academies
EVC Revalidation (Two courses)	Tues 22 <sup>nd</sup> October 2013 09:00 – 12:00 13:30 – 16:30	£25 – Local Authority Schools £25 – Academies buying back EVJ Service £45 – All other academies
EVC Revalidation	Tues 13 <sup>th</sup> May 2014 09:00 – 12:00	To be confirmed
EVC Training for New EVCs	Tuesday 10 <sup>th</sup> June 2014 09:00 – 16:00	To be confirmed
Group Leader Training	Tuesday 24 <sup>th</sup> June 2014 09:00 – 16:00	To be confirmed

All courses will be held at the Forest Centre, Marston Vale.

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

# EVOLVE Step by Step Guides

If you find the prospect of logging into EVOLVE daunting, a step by step starter 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

Similar guidance is available for EVCs or EVC Administrators. '**EVC Essentials**' covers the basic EVOLVE tasks that are likely to be encountered by a new EVC.

Most recently, '**EVOLVE: A Quick Guide for Headteachers**' has been produced. This is intended for headteachers who are unfamiliar with EVOLVE and is a step by step guide to tracking and approving visits.

All guides are available as downloads either from the Resources section of EVOLVE or from the Educational Visits page on the Schools' Portal.

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# Visits Statistical Report for Academic Year: 1st September 2012 – 31st August 2013

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.

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	
	2011-12	2012-13	2011-12	2012-13
Upper Schools	(755)	846	(18,950)	19,224
Middle Schools	(1,190)	1,939	(47,082)	61,954
Special Schools	(2,318)	2,593	(16,746)	21,087
Lower Schools	(1,183)	1,582	(43,787)	51,815
Youth Service Support	(19)	9	(197)	100
Children In Care	(6)	13	(53)	116
<b>Total ( all phases)</b>	<b>5,451</b>	<b>6,982</b>	<b>125,972</b>	<b>154,296</b>

## Breakdown by Visit Type

		Overseas	Residential	Adventurous (external)	Adventurous (own staff)	Other <sup>1</sup>
Total number of visits that included Visit Type	2011-12	(79)	(218)	(522)	(277)	(4,615)
	2012-13	76	236	691	616	5,638
Total number of different establishments	2011-12	(32)	(80)	(84)	(26)	(110)
	2012-13	32	90	92	21	109

(Previous year figures in brackets.)

<sup>1</sup> 'Other' refers to the vast majority of visits, fixtures, local fieldwork etc.

## Comments

The overall number of visits has increased for the second year running. The academic year 2012-13 saw a 22% increase in the total number of visits (from 5,471 to 6,987). During the last academic year, the number rose across all phases. (Prior to that there had been a slight decline in the number of visits taking place in Upper Schools between 2010-11 and 2011 - 12).

Comparing 2012 -13 data to the previous academic year:

- There has been a fall in the total number of overseas visits although the actual number of establishments conducting overseas visits has remained constant at 32.
- There has been an increase in the total number of residential visits (218 to 236) which is consistent with the increase in the number of establishments organising residential visits (80 to 90).
- There has been a 32% rise in the total number of visits involving adventurous activity (522 to 691). This corresponds with an increase in the number of establishments organising adventurous visits last year (84 – 92).<sup>2</sup>
- There has been a massive rise of 122% for visits classified 'Adventurous own staff' despite a fall in the number of establishments leading their own adventurous activity. More schools are appreciating the contribution adventurous activity can make to GCSE PE. This is clearly reflected here.

During the last academic year there were 76 visits abroad. As would be expected, a significant number were for the purpose of ski-ing. More notable additions were an exchange visit to the Peoples Republic of China by All Saints Academy and a three week visit to Tanzania by a group of Vandyke sixth formers as part of the World Challenge Programme. Other destinations included the USA, Poland and Bulgaria. In total, fourteen different countries have been visited by schools from Central Bedfordshire in the last year: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Spain, Switzerland, USA, Tanzania and The People's Republic of China.

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## Greensand Trust (Article by Erika Pratt)

**Do you need a venue for meetings and delivering training?**

**Are you looking out for our new learning opportunities?**

The Greensand Trust has a new **Woodland Training and Education Centre!**

**The Working Woodlands Centre** can be found in Maulden, Bedfordshire. It is our new training and education base and the perfect location for us to support people of all ages to gain skills and learn about woodlands and their management. In conjunction with nearby workshops it is hoped we can help local woodlands to be managed more positively for wildlife and people. The centre itself has a purpose built classroom, toilet facilities, parking and there is easy access from the centre to the stunning nearby ancient woodland of Maulden Wood.

Book a woodland field visit with us now or rooms are available to hire.

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<sup>2</sup> Many visit are classified as both 'Adventurous – External Provider' and 'Adventurous – Own staff' where there is a mix of providers on one visit.

Learning outside during autumn and winter can be just as much fun as in the summer and we would love to share local woodlands and ponds, reserves and meadows with you and your pupils. We can help support learning in the great outdoors, offer opportunities to experience the changing seasons and explore the creatures and habitats with the Greensand Trust.

We offer a range of activities which fit with themes and topics being explored in school. We can also help you make the most of your own school grounds and local green spaces. Please contact us to discuss how we could work together. We also deliver educational activities in **Rushmere Country Park**, near Leighton Buzzard and **Wadelows Nature Reserve** at Poplars Garden Centre, Toddington. For news and information about upcoming events or training follow us on Twitter @GreensandTrust or join our electronic mailing list by emailing [info@greensandtrust.org](mailto:info@greensandtrust.org)

The Greensand Trust is an independent environmental charity, which relies on the support of the public and grants to fund its activities, and no profit is made from our education service. Our charge for sessions represents good value for money, and our experienced staff are able to support you with planning and organising your visit from start to finish to ensure a memorable experience for your pupils.

For further information please contact Erika on 01525 378101 or by email at [info@greensandtrust.org](mailto:info@greensandtrust.org) or visit our website [www.greensandtrust.org](http://www.greensandtrust.org)



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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>3</sup> any staff accounts for those who have now left the school. Please 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.

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<sup>3</sup> If a staff account has any history attached it can be disabled but not deleted. This is for future audit purposes



## 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 to see 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 headteachers 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 full instructions.

## .....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