



Educational Visits & Journeys

NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2015



Contact

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

Please note that Celia Dawson has now taken up a new post within Central Bedfordshire Council and is no longer available for Evolve / visit related enquiries.

Links

EVOLVE for Central Bedfordshire Schools

www.centralbedfordshirevisits.org.uk

Schools' Portal – Educational Visits Pages

www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/schools-portal/human-resources/educational-visits.aspx

Central Bedfordshire CPD Online

<http://www.centralbedscpd.co.uk/multiagency/cpd/default.asp?sid>

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CBC Duty Emergency Contact Number

Please be aware that there has been a change to the phone number used to contact Central Bedfordshire Council in an emergency occurring on a school visit. Visit Leaders will now need to phone:

07964 111942

to contact the Duty Emergency Planning Officer (DEPO).

Please update your documentation accordingly. New versions of Appendix M & N – Emergency Contact Cards- are available from the Resources section of EVOLVE.

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

Welcome

Another academic year is now upon us and relaxed summer days are just a distant memory as staff come to terms with the challenges presented by a new school year and a new cohort of students.

It has become a tradition in recent years for a newsletter to be circulated to schools to inform all staff with regard to policy updates, visit ideas and to celebrate the successes from the previous academic year. If you have any visit ideas or best practice you would like to share in future, please let me know.

Schools' Portal

Supporting resources and documentation continue to be available from the **Schools' Portal** although feedback would suggest that the Educational Visits pages are hard to find. To overcome this I would suggest creating the following link as a shortcut in your browser:

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

Training Update



The following Training courses are scheduled for this Academic Year:

Course Description	Date and Time	Cost
EVC Training for New EVCs	Tues 6 th October 2015 08:45-16:00	Local Authority Schools £74
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £74
		All other academies £124
Group Leader Training	Tues 13 th October 2015 08:45-16:00	Local Authority Schools £74
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £74
		All other academies £124
EVC Revalidation	Tues 20 th October 2015 09:00 – 12:30	Local Authority Schools £27
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £27
		All other academies £48
EVC Training for New EVCs	Tuesday 19 th April 2016 09:00 – 16:00	Local Authority Schools £76
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £76
		All other academies £127
Group Leader Training	Tues 26 th April 2016 09:00 – 16:00	Local Authority Schools £76
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £76
		All other academies £127
EVC Revalidation	Thurs 5 th May 2016 09:00 – 12:30	Local Authority Schools £28
		Academies buying back EVJ Service £28
		All other academies £49

All courses will be held at the Forest Centre, Marston Vale and can be booked through [Central Bedfordshire CPD Online](#).

For more information, please refer to the 'Training' section of EVOLVE or the Educational Visits page of the Schools' Portal.

Generic risk Assessments

Generic risk assessments are a fantastic resource and save school staff hours of work in preparation for a visit. However, there have been a number of instances in the past year where generic risk assessments have been misused, (e.g. taking a generic risk assessment from another authority and adding it to the visit form unedited). This creates a perception that risks have not been considered – even if they have.

Why use generic risk assessments?

The use of generic risk assessments is recognised as an efficient and effective means of identifying potential risks for a forthcoming visit and putting in place suitable control measures to negate those risks. However, generic risk assessments do have a weakness in that they cannot consider **all** risks for **all** visits for **all** pupils because a generic risk assessment does not take into consideration the specific strengths weaknesses and needs of pupils and staff. It is therefore recommended that generic risk assessments are used as a starting point only, an *aide memoire*, rather than beginning with a blank piece of paper every time you need to produce a risk assessment.

Where can I find generic risk assessments?

Your school probably has generic risk assessments already for visits that are likely to be repeated, for example taking a group on a coach or a walk from the school gates to a nearby location. These will be stored either on a shared drive or on the 'Establishment Documents' section of EVOLVE. If in doubt, ask your EVC.

A number of very detailed generic risk assessments can be found in the Resources section of EVOLVE. These were written by another adviser in another county so be sure to check every line for relevance and delete anything that does not apply before adding any further details to reflect the specific needs of your group. You will also need to edit the 'footer' to include your own details.

Do I need to edit a generic risk assessment?

Only if you need to! With a 'low level' routine visit, it may well be that a generic risk assessment, previously used by your school, captures all of the foreseeable risks. On the other hand there may be a pupil with specific needs that could potentially lead to further risks that have not already been identified in the generic risk assessment. These will need to be added.

Is there anything else I need to do?

Written risk assessments are evidence, should you need it, that due process has been followed. Make sure you share the final risk assessment with other supervisors for the visit. It would be good practice for them to sign the final risk assessment to acknowledge their awareness of identified hazards and controls. It is also good practice to make pupils aware of any risks in a pre-visit briefing. This could be as simple as '...we will need to cross a busy road and the procedure will be.....'.

Visits Statistical Report for Academic Year: 1st September 2014 – 31st August 2015

The overall number of visits conducted by schools in Central Bedfordshire and recorded on EVOLVE has shown a decline for the first time in a number of years. Lower Schools are the only school phase to report a year on year increase. However, there has been another increase in the actual number of children participating in educational visits.

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	
	2013-14	2014-15	2013-14	2014-15
Upper Schools	1,080	994	18,651	21,749
Middle Schools	2,261	2,167	69,199	84,390
Special Schools	4,829	3,740	32,922	27,805
Lower Schools	1,672	2,040	54,707	73,018
Youth Service Support	8	14	30	157
Children In Care Council	14	14	142	233
Inspiring Music		1		11
Total (all phases)	9,864	8,970	175,650	207,376

Breakdown by Visit Type

		Overseas	Residential	Adventurous (external)	Adventurous (own staff)	Other ¹
Total number of visits that included visit type	2013-14	81	233	1,042	691	8,394
	2014-15	75	239	628	258	8,114
Total number of different establishments	2013-14	32	93	96	24	109
	2014-15	34	97	94	26	111

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

Educational Visits Coordinator Business

Administration

The beginning of a new school year is a good time to ensure that your EVOLVE system is up to date and all administration is in place. Could I therefore urge Educational Visits Coordinators (EVCs) and EVC Administrators to attend to the following points:

- Disable the EVOLVE accounts of staff who have left your school. (If the member of staff has moved to another school in Central Beds then we are able to migrate the account across)
- Remind staff to update their own EVOLVE profiles and **ensure a current email address is provided** in order to receive alerts from the system
- Delete any 'test' visits or undated visits where you know there are no longer plans for them to take place
- Provide new staff with 'Visit' induction. There is a good Beginners Guide for EVOLVE to support this
- Inform the Compliance and Risk adviser of any EVC or headteacher changes and provide their email address
- Ensure that any documents (operating procedures, generic risk assessments) on shared drives or in the 'Establishment Documents' section of EVOLVE are up to date
- Ensure that a record of staff competencies, in relation to management of educational visits, is in place. There should also be a procedure for routine updates of the competence record (staff meeting, Appraisal etc.)

EVOLVE – Establishment Documents

One of the most underused resources on EVOLVE is the 'Establishment Documents' section. This section allows an EVC to upload school specific documentation to EVOLVE via the 'Dashboard'. Uploaded documents can only be accessed by staff from that school via the Resources section. A library of visit related documents (generic risk assessments, operating procedures, letter templates etc.) can be stored here and accessed from anywhere that has access to the internet. Many schools currently store their visit related documentation on the school intranet or on a shared drive. The Establishment Documents section is more accessible than most school intranets which can only be accessed in school.

For more information, please refer to the EVC Essentials document found in the Resources section of EVOLVE.

Competency Assessment

EVCs are reminded that it is a requirement of the CBC policy that all staff involved in supervision of educational visits should have undergone a competency assessment. A pro-forma (Appendix O) can be downloaded from the internet for this purpose. The assessment should be revisited periodically to capture any development, for example as part of the appraisal cycle. A competency assessment in relation to supervision of visits could also form part of the staff induction process.

It is appreciated that headteachers and EVCs are fully aware of their staff's competencies. However, a completed competency assessment form serves as evidence that this has been considered in the same way as a written risk assessment provides evidence that foreseeable risks have been considered.

Group Leader Training

In order for a member of staff to be considered competent to lead a higher level visit (residential, adventurous or overseas), the competency assessment process requires them to attend a full day Group Leader Training course organised by CBC and endorsed by the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP). This requirement does not apply if the Group Leader in question has previous demonstrable experience in another authority, school or setting.

It is perfectly acceptable for leaders and supervisors of low level visits to have undergone in-house training delivered either by the EVC, the Compliance and Risk Adviser, or by a suitably qualified external provider.

EVC Succession

There have been a number of instances in the past academic year where a school has been left without an EVC as a result of staff changes or illness. It would be best practice therefore to identify a potential future EVC (e.g. a 'higher level' visit leader) and provide them with appropriate experience and professional development in preparation for either of these eventualities and to safeguard continuity in the visit approval process.

It is appreciated that this would be more difficult in a small lower school with few staff where the Headteacher is likely to be the EVC.

Environmental Education

The Bedfordshire Environmental Educators' Network is holding a Professional Development Day for Teachers. Details are as follows:

Date: Thursday 11th February 2016

Location: ZSL Whipsnade Zoo, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 2LF

Theme: "Learning in the Natural Environment"

Key Stage: This event is relevant for teachers who are involved in teaching at Key Stage 1, 2 and 3.

The day will consist of four workshops which all teachers will carousel through. The day will also allow for opportunities of networking between teachers and members of the Bedfordshire Environmental Educators' Network. There will also be a key note speaker focusing on insights into learning outside the classroom – speaker to be announced nearer the date.

Timings: 10.00am – 4.15pm

Cost: £25 including VAT - fee includes lunch and refreshments

Workshops:

1. Found Music – Luton Culture & Wildlife Trust BCN

Bringing together unexpected national curriculum links, create a musical instrument using natural materials found on your local nature reserve and green spaces.

2. Marvellous Maps- The Greensand Trust and The Forest of Marston Vale

An introduction to maps and map reading – discover how you can develop these key skills in a fun and engaging way allowing you to hone your students' map skills.

3. Minibeast Investigation – ZSL Whipsnade Zoo & Groundwork

Explore how you can get your pupils working scientifically, collecting real data on species found in your very own school grounds. Explore habitats, food chains and using scientific keys.

4. Nutrition and Smoothies - Sustrans

This workshop will have with a practical aspect of making a Smoothie using a static bike. We will then look at how this can be used for health education in a school situation.

Spaces are limited so book now!

To book:

To book a place on this fantastic day contact Cat Hickey on **01582 871563** or email

Cathriona.hickey@zsl.org

Shuttleworth Activity Centre

Shuttleworth Activity Centre is set in the beautiful landscape of Old Warden Park. It shares its 500 acres of protected parkland and lakes with alpacas, deer and a wide variety of other wildlife.

Shuttleworth Activity Centre welcomes a wide variety of groups and is a great choice for schools, local authority groups and adult training organisations who want to use the centre's excellent facilities to provide their group with an exciting and fulfilling experience.

The centre is perfect for outdoor learning and is a holder of the Learning Outside the Classroom (LOTG) – Quality Badge. It offers a variety of instructed activities and programmes, corporate events, NGB qualification courses and other great facilities. Also, the centre is able to offer camping and the option to be catered for in the restaurant.

Shuttleworth Activity Centre is situated in the beautiful village of Old Warden, Bedfordshire. It is two miles West of the Biggleswade North roundabout on the A1.

At Shuttleworth Activity centre there is flexibility in planning an activity programme, arranging catering and meeting your budget, to help you achieve the very best for your group.

The centre is staffed by an initiative set up by the Shuttleworth College Outdoor Education department to allow its students to gain work experience. The activities are delivered by trained students studying Outdoor Education, under the supervision of highly qualified staff. The centre is therefore able to offer very affordable prices for activity days and weeks.

Facilities;

- ❖ Camping Facilities (including equipment) for up to 50
- ❖ Onsite restaurant
- ❖ Optional instructed activities including; Bush Craft, Raft Building, Archery, Crate Stack, Kayaking, Canoeing and Orienteering.
- ❖ Sports Hall, all-weather court and fields
- ❖ 500 Acre rural location

Have a look at a film clip and find more detail of the activities and facilities offered;

<http://www.shuttleworth.ac.uk/shuttleworth/shuttleworth-activity-centre>

To find out more, contact 01767 626222, email sac@bedford.ac.uk or visit the web page.

.....And Finally

Please remember that I am here to help you with visit related enquiries so please do not hesitate to pick up the phone if you want to discuss a new visit idea. The chances are that I know a school that has conducted that visit before!

Have an enjoyable and successful year.

Pete Hardy