



Policy and Procedures for Off-Site, Visits and Trips Policy, Procedures and Guidance

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Introduction

The Department for Education's (DfE) has updated its Guidance on Health and safety on educational visits. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>

The guidance, which links to Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel National Guidance, also endorses the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom's [LOtC Quality Badge](#), the national accreditation which ensures providers have the appropriate safety standards and liability insurance in place.

The guidance clarifies how health and safety law applies to educational visits and is designed to reassure establishments that **where sensible and proportionate precautions are taken in planning and running visits and trips, then staff should not fear prosecution** by the HSE.

Organisations are encouraged to strike the right balance between protecting children and young people from risk and ensuring that they can learn from the stimulating challenges and valuable experiences that educational visits provide. The statement also encourages employers to remove any wasteful bureaucracy in organising visits and activities.

Ofsted have made clear that they consider this area of activity, amongst others specifically named, to be essential elements of an overall successful **safeguarding approach** to be encouraged and dealt with on a proportional basis.

The guidance is welcomed by all involved with outdoor learning, especially the call for a more sensible and proportionate approach to health and safety and the reduction in red tape.

Aspire academy is part of the Futura Learning Partnership and as such this document recognises the fact that there is a trust wide policy in place. This document therefore aims to build on and specify approaches to educational trips and visits that reflect the context of Aspire Academy.

Aspire Academy is a specialist SEMH school and offsite trips and visits are delivered more frequently and as part of the curriculum. Due to the additional needs of the students at Aspire, these trips are conducted with due consideration of the risks specific to the students attending. Trips will therefore involve smaller numbers and appropriate staffing ratios. All students hold individual risk assessments.

Policy

1. Aspire Academy has formally adopted the employers' policy and guidance produced by the Outdoor Education Advisers panel and use it as part of our own policy and guidance approach. This guidance can be found at <http://oeapng.info/>
2. We require all those who are working with children and young people, directly for us or on our behalf, to comply with the content of this policy and guidance.
3. We will also take account of and reference:
 - Any organisational policies which may apply, e.g., the overall Safeguarding approach, our 3Cs Policy covering critical incidents, First Aid/Medication/Bereavement Policy, Use of Transport Policy, Health and Safety etc.
 - National Governing Body guidelines covering sports and outdoor activities and comply with the standard set, and
 - Other sources of good practice.

Our competent person's critical incident support sheet is included in an appendix to this document. It will be laminated and taken on all visits/trips. Staff will be trained in its use.

4. Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC)

We will appoint our own EVC and ensure they are trained and accredited by a competent specialist, then refreshed on a regular basis, noting that a formal revalidation is necessary every three years.

5. Visit / Deputy Visit leader

We will appoint Visit leaders and Deputies and ensure they are trained and accredited by a competent specialist, then refreshed on a regular basis, noting that a formal revalidation is necessary every three years. This person may cascade their training to untrained colleagues who also carry out the role. In the following year our next identified Visit leaders and Deputies will follow the same process.

6. Learning outside the Classroom (LOtC)

We will source accredited and competent providers wherever possible to enhance our provision and recognise, for example, the LOtC Quality Badge provides a national award combining the essential elements of provision -

learning and safety - into one easily recognisable and trusted accreditation scheme for ALL types of learning outside the classroom provider organisations, catering for children and young people throughout the UK. The scheme is managed and developed by the Council for Learning Outside the Classroom. (www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk)

We recognise compliance with the standards is essential and not to do so would compromise the support available from Delegated Services.

8. External Provider check

We will comply with notification and consent procedures and timescales requested by our competent persons and include in this commitment any DofE activity involving outdoor learning.

9. Mini bus drivers

We will use the latest up to date guidance for the driving of minibuses, by accessing the OEAP National Guidance 4-5b Transport-Minibuses <http://oeapng.info/> and ensure that the driver(s) have undertaken a Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme course (MiDAS), or equivalent.

Procedures and Guidance

10. External Providers

These are third parties contracted to provide instruction or coaching for activities, residential accommodation, travel packages, or overseas expeditions. All external providers must have a clear contract with the establishment and be subject to robust checks. At a minimum, every provider must complete the Provider Statement, 8p **Provider Statement** unless they already hold the Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge.

A Provider Statement or duplicate risk assessments is not required by our competent support from organisations which hold the LOtC Quality Badge. <https://lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/>. However, a risk management plan should be completed to record any aspects of the visit for which the establishment is responsible. E.g. Transport to and from the venue, downtime, medical issues etc.

11. Consent forms

We will use a blanket consent form at the start of the year for local/day visits with low risk profiles. In addition we will inform parents/guardians/carers on every occasion of residential and higher risk activities, all of category C and likely some of category B, and require written consent. Our form makes clear it is their responsibility to update us on any medical issues or changes to personal details

12. Notification Process

All category C visits/trips including residential visits or those of a high risk or adventurous nature will be notified to our competent persons.

The current secure online Notification Form can be accessed via the Delegated Services web site and then through the establishment 'GO TO' private site.

COMPLETED FORMS WILL BE RETURNED AT LEAST:

- **FOUR WEEKS PRIOR TO RESIDENTIAL AND CATEGORY "C" VISITS**
- **AND SIX WEEKS PRIOR TO OVERSEAS VISITS**

We note this enables the necessary checks to be carried out, any amendments made to the arrangements and approval given.

Failure to notify and receive approval for an activity in Category 'C' could result in:

- insurance cover for all those taking part in an activity being invalidated
- contravening safety guidelines for 'Off-site visits/School trips'
- lack of emergency support or back-up in the event of an incident occurring
- adverse publicity for the establishment organising the event
- cancellation of the Off-site visit/School trip, and
- potential for litigation, both civil and criminal.

13. "Category of activity"

When assessing the most appropriate **category** in which to place an activity, account must be taken of various factors including:

- the ages and abilities of the children or young people involved
- the environment and site of the activity
- the prevailing or forecasted weather conditions
- the experience and qualifications of visit leaders supervisory staff, and

- any special needs of children or young people.

The lists of activities in the various categories below are by no means exhaustive and will be added to or interchanged as experience dictates.

Category ‘A’ comprises activities/events that present no significant risks beyond those that may be experienced in everyday living and moving around.

For example:

- visiting local libraries, museums, exhibitions, theatres, concerts
- attending musical/arts events, festivals – on same day events
- field study visits in environments presenting no technical hazards
- visits to local Swimming Pools where correct ratios of lifeguards are on duty
- farm visits
- zoological gardens, nature reserves and National Trust type properties
- access to off-site playing fields, sports facilities, ‘away’ fixtures, and
- local walks, surveys, census gathering exercises.

Category ‘B’ comprises activities and events that are considered during the **risk assessment** process to be of higher profile than those of Category ‘A’.

For example:

- orienteering in local parks or woodlands
- walking, jogging, cycling (on or off-road), in non-remote countryside
- local low level camping trips where basic facilities are available on site
- field study work in non-remote upland or coastal areas
- team building/problem solving exercises, low level (up to a height of 1.25 m) rope courses and ‘assault’ course circuits
- visits to major cities in UK, visits to theme parks
- horse riding/pony trekking in non-remote areas, and
- sponsored walks & large scale events where many people participate or watch.

NB ** Overnight camping trips which fall into Category ‘B’ will be notified to the competent persons on the notification form as they constitute a residential experience.

Category ‘C’ comprises activities/events that are potentially of a high risk nature that require specially trained, experienced and qualified staff to lead. Many of these activities fall within the **4 generic groupings** currently covered by the Adventure Activities Licensing Authority www.hse.gov.uk/aala/, although this

may change in due course. These groupings are: climbing, caving, trekking and water-based activities.

For example:

- climbing plus abseiling, the use of artificial climbing structures
- caving plus mine exploration, cave diving
- trekking plus piste skiing & artificial dri-slope skiing, and
- water-based activities: canoeing, kayaking, sailing, off shore cruising windsurfing rafting, sub-aqua & snorkelling, water & jet skiing, paddle boarding, surfing, dragon boating, gorge walking, and **open water swimming**.

Additional category C activities include:

- remote or 'wild country' camping (Ten Tors, Duke of Edinburgh's Award expeditions)
- overseas visits & exchanges and overseas expeditions
- motor sports, quad biking, motorbike scrambling
- air-born activities (excluding commercial flights) i.e. gliding, hang/para gliding, parachuting
- hybrid activities combing elements of rock & water i.e. gorge/ghyll scrambling, canyoning, sea traversing, 'coasteering'
- archery
- combat activities i.e. self-defense, judo, fencing, boxing, wrestling, martial arts.
- pistol & rifle shooting & paint balling, and
- fishing: inland waters, coastal & sea venues.

Staff or managers should be certain of the educational benefits for their children and young people of such activities as paint balling, pistol/rifle shooting etc. when undertaking their risk assessment.

14. The Duke of Edinburgh's Award

All **Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DofE) expedition** training and assessment ventures also need to be notified.

If DofE work forms *part* of a residential or overseas experience, then the normal Off-site/Educational visits notification process will be followed.

15. Risk Management

The employer has a legal duty to ensure that risks are managed requiring them to be reduced to an “acceptable” level. This requires that suitable and sufficient risk management systems are in place and are proportionate to the risks and should not impose unnecessary bureaucracy. Support, training and resources should be available to all staff involved.

There is a requirement for the risk assessment process to be recorded and for suitable and sufficient control measures to be identified for any significant risks i.e. those that may cause serious harm to individuals. Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly.

The risk management of an activity should be informed by the benefits to be gained from participating. DS strongly recommends a “Risk-Benefit Assessment” approach, whereby the starting point for any risk assessment should be a consideration of the targeted benefits and learning outcomes. Where appropriate staff, children and young people should be involved in the process.

Further guidance can be found at 1b Foundations

https://oeapng.info/search_gcse/?q=1b

And 4.3c Risk Management – an overview

https://oeapng.info/search_gcse/?q=4.3c

16. Emergency Procedures and Lockdown

We will have emergency planning procedures in place in the event of a critical incident. Every visit leader, deputy visit leader and all other members of the staff team and will be familiar with emergency planning procedures and the reporting mechanism. .

Relevant emergency contact telephone numbers will be carried by leaders at all times during an offsite educational visit but should only be used in the case of a genuine emergency. Under no circumstances will these telephone numbers be given to young people or to their parents or carers.

Where coach travel is to be used, we will brief coach drivers in advance about emergency/evacuation procedures for the trip. E.g. arranging a second pick up point.

We will facilitate a coach evacuation briefing at the start of each coach journey and ensure staff are spread throughout the vehicle for each journey.

We will brief staff and children/young people about the use of mobile phones on a trip and especially in the case of an emergency.

Refer to 4.3e Safeguarding

<https://oeapng.info/wpcontent/uploads/dlm.../01/4.3e-Safeguarding.pdf>

We will have a tested and robust lock down procedure for all Offsite Visits. Lock down procedures should be seen as a sensible and proportionate response to any external or internal incident which has the potential to pose a threat to the safety of staff and pupils on the trip. Procedures should aim to minimise disruption to the learning environment whilst ensuring the safety of all pupils and staff. Pupils/Young People will be suitably briefed and involved in the lockdown process where appropriate. Our procedures will include:

- Identifying the likelihood of a security related incident occurring
- assessing the level of impact
- developing plans and procedures to manage and respond to any threats

Refer to Government advice in School and College Security Guidance (November 2019)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-and-college-security>

17. Insurance

We will explicitly check that there is appropriate insurance in place which covers all offsite visits to be undertaken, including Foreign Travel (where applicable), special activities and volunteer leaders.

18. Data Protection

We will ensure that we have in place suitable systems to protect information held about staff and children/young people and that we comply with current data protection law. This will include how personal data for visits is shared and procedures for handling it.

Deputy visit leaders will have a duplicate copy of all pertinent trip documentation.

Refer to;

The guide to the General Data Protection Regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guide-to-the-general-data-protection-regulation>

OEAP Participant Information and Data Protection <https://oeapng.info/.../4.4j-Participant-Information-and-Data-Protection.pdf>

Other valuable guidance can be accessed at:

www.hse.gov.uk/education
National Guidance for the Management of Outdoor Learning
Adventurous Activity Licensing Authority (HSE)
Association for Physical Education - safe practice
The Duke of Edinburgh's Award
Council for Learning Outside the Classroom
Institute for Outdoor Learning
RoSPA

Appendix 1

Trips/off-site visits including sports events: EMERGENCY NUMBERS and EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

When preparing for off-site trips type in your establishment details at the bottom, then copy and laminate this sheet. **If going abroad add the local emergency services number and you may wish to translate extra copies of this document into the language of the country you are visiting.** Take it with you along with medical and emergency contact details for your Pupil/Children/Young People and staff/volunteers. Copies of this sheet should be made and put on display in all vehicles being used and held by visit leaders **and** deputy visit leaders who must travel in separate vehicles, if more than one, or at either end of a single vehicle. *(Tell the volunteers and children about the form in case it is you who are affected by an incident.)*

If a critical incident occurs:

- **First, ensure the safety and welfare** of all the members of your party, as far as you can in the circumstances.
- **Second, get Emergency attention.** Call **999 (UK only) or 112 (EU)**. Call and ask for help from Police, Fire, Ambulance, or Coastguard Services as required.
- **Third, RING the Executive Director, Delegated Services on the emergency only number:**

+44 07979 - 425 - 989

He will support you and liaise with your establishment to aid an appropriate response and support. Make sure you tell him your telephone number and location and if the emergency services are on their way.

After calling him act as follows:

- **Telephone and tell your Head teacher/Manager/EVC/Home Contact** (depending on time of day/day of week) all relevant details of the incident. They must activate your communication plan and will contact parent/carers as necessary.
- **Write down accurately all relevant facts**, times, witness details, and preserve any vital evidence. If you can; take photographs or video.
- **Make contact again with your establishment** as regularly as necessary, informing them of progress dealing with the incident and further information resulting from the incident. (Use e-mail, text etc. if you are certain the receiver is acting on these.)

Please Note - most members of your party will have mobile phones or similar devices. *Ensure they do not contact anyone by speaking directly to, texting, forwarding photographs or moving images, using social media, etc., until official calls have been made.* This will aid clarity, avoids blocking telephone lines and helps with the response.