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# Educational Visits (Learning Outside the Classroom) Policy

March 2025

*Version 1.3*

*Approved: 10.03.25*

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## 1 Introduction

1.1 This policy covers all educational visits that occur outside the school premises. This ranges from walks around the locality to residential visits of several days duration. It includes also Outdoor and Adventurous Activities. This policy has been developed to ensure that the school is compliant statutory, local and best practice guidance, including:

- *Health and Safety: Advice for Schools (DfE 2013)*
- *Outdoor Education Advisers Panel (The Association of Advisers for Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits) National Guidance*
- *Oxfordshire County Council policies*

1.2 A policy such as this cannot cover all eventualities which might be encountered but seeks to put in place a framework within which group leaders and/or the Educational Visits Committee (EVC) can seek to apply their own decision-making processes.

## 2 Aims and Objectives for Educational Visits and Learning outside the classroom.

2.1 Through a programme of structured educational visits, which are effectively linked to the curriculum, we aim to:

- *Provide our children with first-hand experiences.*
- *Develop a detailed knowledge of our local community.*
- *Provide opportunities for sporting fixtures and competitions.*
- *Make the most of opportunities which are offered locally and beyond.*
- *Provide the opportunity for a residential visit at least once as children progress through school.*
- *Ensure that all such visits are conducted in a safe manner.*

2.2 We run a wide range of educational visits. These may include:

- *Walks around the village and nature walks.*
- *Participation in local events, such as sporting fixtures, theatre performances, etc.*
- *Day visits to places of historical, environmental, religious or other interest to support specific curriculum areas.*
- *Residential visits.*
- *Opportunities to participate in cultural activities, such as theatre performances, trips and visits.*

## 3 Responsibilities

3.1 The school follows the Local Authority 'Educational Visits' guidance, which is based on the national guidance from OEAP, as summarised below. Responsibilities for Health and Safety on school visits are determined as below.

- *The Governing Body ensure that there are robust procedures for the management of Health & Safety in place within school; and monitor the effectiveness of these procedures.*
- *The Head teacher develops procedures in line with national guidance; ensures that staff are aware of national, local and school policy; and quality assures risk assessments for each visit to ensure that safe practice is being followed.*
- *The Designated Group Leader takes overall responsibility for the well-being of the children during the visit, provides a risk assessment, and adapts this according to any circumstances which may occur.*
- *The School Administrator takes responsibility for ensuring that any adults participating in a school visit comply with requirements for DBS checks, etc.*
- *All responsible adults (staff and those volunteers with DBS check) take immediate responsibility for a group of children, follow risk assessments, and ensure that children are kept safe at all times.*
- *The school's Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) is Mrs Conway. This role may be carried out by the Head teacher, who also has other specific responsibilities.*

## **4 Procedure for approval and notification of Activities and Visits**

4.1 The Headteacher should agree in principle the visit, date and cost.

4.2 There are different categories of activities and visits:

- *Category A visits: These visits are close to the school, done on a regular basis involving environments known to the staff. It would include normal daily life activities. Examples include walks and exploring the area near to the school site, visits to the local church, library, school sporting fixtures and other regular non-complex activity.*
- *Category B visits: These visits are to areas beyond the local area involving more complex environments and activity, and will typically be a one off or irregular activity in the school year. The leaders will be approved to lead the visit by the EVC. There may be some specialist training attached to some activities in this area. Examples include visits further afield, farm visits, local parks, museum visits, swimming lessons in offsite pools, zoo visits, sporting festivals and larger tournaments and some basic outdoor education activity.*
- *Category C visits: These visits include residential visits, overseas visits, adventure activities and activities involving water. Examples of activities would include Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) expeditions, outdoor adventure activities including hills and mountains, motor sports, adventures on water or field studies involving water. A more comprehensive list can be found here:  
<https://oeapng.info/downloads/download-info/8-1f-activities-requiring-employer-approval/>*

4.3 OCC delegates the responsibility for formal approval of category A and B visits to the Headteacher. It is a requirement of this policy that Headteachers carry out this function in accordance with OEAP National Guidance.

- 4.4 Category C visits must also be endorsed by OCC's Off Site Visits Officer. All Category C visit plans should be prepared on the OCC eVisit 2.0 visit planning portal, approved through school processes and submitted to the Off Site Visits Officer for review 4 weeks prior to the visit.
- 4.5 All Category A, B and C Educational visits requiring OCC insurance should be compiled on the Termly Insurance Declaration form at the start of term, before visits take place, and submitted to [insurance@oxfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:insurance@oxfordshire.gov.uk). The form can be accessed at <https://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/insurance/school-journey-and-personal-accident-insurance>
- 4.6 Good practice states risk management follows the principles of an identified risk benefit process as outlined in the National Guidance. Headteachers must ensure that policies are accurate and the actual delivery of the visit reflects these, so creating a culture of safe and effective practice in both planning and delivery.
- 4.7 The Head teacher should see the communication to parents before it is sent. The letter to parents should include the objective for the visit, the organisation of the day (including transport), and reference to the school charging policy (where applicable).
- 4.8 It is the responsibility of the Group Leader to send this letter. For 'free' visits, the group leader and/or class teacher should collect reply slips (via MCAS). For costed visits, these should come through the school office to ensure that all finances are accounted for.
- 4.9 A group register should be compiled for every visit, which includes:
- *The names of all children attending the visit. If prepared in advance, this should be updated on the day by blanking out any children who are absent. A copy should be left with:*
    - *The school office*
    - *The group leader*
    - *Any other school staff attending the visit.*
  - *The emergency contact details of all children should be easily accessible. This may be via the school office, but it is essential that trips which run beyond the school day (e.g. residential, late evenings, weekends), when the office may be closed, should have access to all emergency numbers and details on file.*

## 5 Preparing pupils for the visit

- 5.1 Providing information and guidance to pupils is an important part of preparing for a school visit. Pupils should have a clear understanding about what is expected of them and what the visit will entail. Pupils must understand what standard of behaviour is expected and why rules must be followed. Lack of control and discipline can be a major contributory factor when accidents occur.
- 5.2 Pupils should also be told about any potential dangers and how they should act to ensure their own and others' safety. Pupils should be involved in planning, implementing and evaluating their own curricular work and have opportunities to take different roles within an activity. This could include considering any health and safety issues.

## 6 Risk Assessment

- 6.1 A generic risk assessment which covers likely potential hazards is circulated to staff at the start of each academic year. This should be *adapted* to take account of the local context. For regular events (e.g. Forest Schools), it is acceptable to put in place a risk assessment which covers the whole year; however, any 'new' activities introduced may also need to be risk assessed.
- 6.2 A Risk Benefit Assessment (RBA) form will be prepared for each school visit. The risk assessment should be based on a detailed understanding of the location to be visited, which may necessitate a pre-visit.
- 6.3 Risk Assessments must be simple, manageable, proportional, suitable and sufficient. The system must:
- *identify significant hazards;*
  - *assess the risk of harm;*
  - *put control measures in place;*
  - *check if anything else is needed;*
  - *use a simple assessment language – high/medium/low.*
  - *Risk Assessment considers the site and its environment, the group, the activity and the leaders. Risk assessments must be signed by the Head teacher before the visit takes place and are stored in the Head teacher's office.*

## 7 Financing Educational Visits

- 7.1 The school complies with the Education Act 1996 (section 451), and procedure is outlined in the school's Charging and Remissions policy.

## 8 Emergency Procedures

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the EVC/Head teacher to ensure that emergency arrangements are in place for all Educational Visits. This includes ensuring that all involved know who the emergency contact point in the school is for each visit. During school hours, this would be the Head teacher or, if the Head teacher is accompanying the trip, the most senior member of staff present in school. For out of hours and residential visits, staff will be provided with 24-hour contact details for the Head teacher. A generic risk assessment covers likely emergency scenarios.
- 8.2 In the event of a critical incident, the SCPS Critical Incident Management Plan will be followed. A critical incident is defined as where any member(s) of a group undertaking outdoor learning, visits and /or LOTC activities are involved in an incident that will typically:
- *Result in single or multiple fatality*
  - *Incur life threatening injury requiring immediate hospitalisation*

- *Suffer life threatening ill health, requiring immediate hospitalisation*
- *Involve one or more participants having gone missing for a significant period of time*
- *Incur significant media coverage*

## **9 Dissemination**

- 9.1 The Policy is available on the school web site and a paper copy can be obtained from the main school admin office on request.

## **10 Reviewing the Policy**

- 10.1 This policy will be reviewed biannually by the Head teacher and monitored by the Chair of Governors with changes made to ensure that the Policy is relevant and up to date.

## **11 Appendix 1: Some things to consider during the trip: from OEAP National Guidance**

### **Staffing Ratios**

The following are recommended by OEAP. They should, however, be considered carefully in the light of the activity which is taking place. Risk assessment should consider: whether the class will be together at all times; the level of risk in the activity being undertaken. Where groups separate within a location, these should be followed strictly.

EYFS: 1:4 as minimum

KS1: 1:6

KS2: 1:10

In almost all circumstances, there should be (i) at least one qualified teacher per class and (ii) one other adult present. The exception to this may be, for example, where activities are taking place at another local school and their staff are part of the overall supervision.

### **DBS**

All helpers should be appropriately vetted, and careful consideration should be given as to whether voluntary helpers are engaging in regulated activity. If so they should be required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Enhanced check with barred list check. Regulated Activity includes taking sole responsibility for a group of children, or participating on a regular basis.

### **Transport**

The driver of a vehicle cannot drive and supervise young people at the same time. Therefore, if in your judgement the young people may need supervising during the journey - because of age, maturity, behaviour, special needs or medical issues etc, then a second adult to provide this supervision is necessary. This will always be the case for a minibus, with children under the age of 7, or with children with significant behavioural or medical issues. Adults driving the school minibus will have completed appropriate training via Oxfordshire County Council.

Where private cars are used, the adult driving should produce to the business manager in advance of the trip:

- A certificate of insurance (this should include Class 1 Business Use for staff employed by the school).
- A driving licence (any endorsements should be made aware to the head teacher, who will risk assess the suitability of the driver)
- For vehicles over three years old, a valid MOT certificate.

### **First Aid**

First Aid cover should always be planned for. This should take into account:

- The nature of the activity.
- The nature of the group.
- The likely injuries associated with the activity.
- The extent to which the group will be isolated from the support of the emergency services (both in terms of distance and response time).

Qualified first-aiders may not be necessary for all off-site activities and visits. However, a basic level of first aid support must be available at all times. This will require that one or more of the staff leading the activity:

- Has a working knowledge of simple first aid and is competent to use the first aid materials carried with the group.
- Knows how to access, and is able to access, qualified first aid support.
- Carries a first aid kit.

For children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), there is a statutory requirement that at least one person who has a current paediatric first aid certificate must accompany children on outings. As a school, we expect that First Aid kits are carried on all visits; access to First Aid is signposted to all staff and volunteers; and that qualified First Aiders will be always be present on the following types of visits:

- Forest Schools
- EYFS visits
- Visits to remote locations or where there is no obvious access to First Aid (parks, beaches, woods)
- Residential visits

Risk assessments for other visits should cover where First Aid provision can be accessed.

### **The Use of External Providers**

The school will ensure that any external providers used for hazardous activities are appropriately accredited and licensed. Examples of such schemes include:

- Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge (covers both quality and safety of all activities offered).
- Adventure Activities Licensing Authority (AALA) licence (this statutory scheme covers only safety management).
- Adventuremark (covers only safety).
- National Governing Body centre approval schemes (applicable where the only provision is a single, specialist activity)

### **Consent**

The school will seek specific consent from parents for any visit which:

- Involves travelling by coach, minibus or car.
- Takes place outside of the school day.
- Involves hazardous activities.

For local/non-hazardous activities, the school will seek consent from parents when a child joins the school. This will be renewed annually. Parents will be informed of the local/non-hazardous activity prior to it taking place.

### **Maintenance of records**

Risk assessments for school activities are maintained in the School Business Manager's office. They will be retained for two academic years, except where there has been an incident recorded, in which case they will be retained in accordance with the relevant protocols for the retention of data.



## **Water**

Swimming and paddling in the sea or other natural waters are potentially dangerous activities for a school group. Swimming in the sea on a coastal visit will not be allowed. Paddling will only be allowed as part of a closely supervised activity. Pupils should always be in sight of their teachers. One teacher should always stay out of the water for better surveillance. Swimming should always be conducted in the presence of, and under the supervision of, qualified lifeguards or instructors and following the procedures written in the school's Swimming Policy.

Where children are close to water (for example, a lake in the local park), this must be specifically considered within the risk assessment. Where children are using inland stretches of water, consideration should also be given to the transmission of infection such as Weil's disease.

## **Farm visits**

Consideration should be given to:

- Farm machinery
- Infections from e coli or other diseases
- Risk from animal bites, etc.
- Handwashing facilities
- Safety standards and animal welfare

## **Additional Needs**

Pupils with additional needs should be included within school visits and this should be planned for. Where a medical need might lead to risk (for the pupil or others), this should be incorporated into the risk assessment. The Head teacher reserves the right to withdraw pupils from educational visits on the grounds of behaviour. This is not a sanction, and would only be made where the pupils' behaviour is likely to create Health & Safety issues on the visit. Inhalers, epipens, etc. must be carried by the adult responsible for the group. It is the responsibility of the group leader to ensure that pupils with medical conditions are identified and that this information is shared on a need-to-know basis with those who might be taking responsibility for the pupil.

## **Crossing Roads**

When crossing major roads, adults should wear fluorescent jackets. *Two adults* should stop the traffic, one on each side of the carriageway, facing the oncoming traffic. Only when the traffic has stopped moving should a third adult lead the children across the road.

## **Headcounts**

Regular headcounts should be undertaken throughout the visit. These must *always* include: when leaving the school building; when seated on the coach before embarking (both outward and return journey); and at any other transition points throughout the day (e.g. the end of lunchtime and visits to the toilet).

### **Sun Safety**

When organising an outdoor visit in the summer, consideration should be given to the risk of sunburn and heatstroke. Measures taken to prevent this are likely to include:

- Wearing tops which cover the shoulders
- Wearing sunhats
- Having access to shade and/or drinking water
- Not participating in activities which are too energetic.

### **Food**

Teachers should be aware of any allergies within the group, particularly if pupils are able to purchase food during the visit. Children should not share packed lunches etc. other than with the explicit permission of parents.

### **Money & valuables**

Children should not be *required* to bring money on a trip or visit. If there are necessary costs, these should be factored into the published price of the visit. Where children are allowed to bring money, for example to visit a souvenir shop, group leaders must:

- Decide whether children (in the case of older pupils) or adults are responsible for the money, and
- Set a maximum amount to be brought.

Children should not bring valuables (phones, ipods etc) on trips.

### **Emergencies**

In the event of an emergency, staff should:

- Keep calm
- Put the welfare of the children first at all times.
- Risk assess continually and take steps to avoid further accident injury.
- Follow directions given by the group leader, or by those in a position of authority (venue staff, emergency services).
- Contact the emergency services *first* (if required), followed by the Head teacher and school. The Head teacher will inform the local authority where required.
- Contact the group leader if they have become separated from the group.