

Off-site Visits and Activities Policy

1. Introduction

Off-site visits/activities are arranged by or on behalf of the College, and would normally take place outside the establishment grounds. Teaching staff, governors and staff working with children and young people believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich their education by providing experiences that would otherwise be impossible. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our children's learning experiences.

In this policy, we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits in order to manage and minimise risk, ensuring the safety and health of all pupils at all times. Within these limits, we seek to make our visits available to all pupils and wherever possible to make them accessible to those with disabilities.

2. Aims and Objectives

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

- enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
- provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
- promote the independence of our children as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.

Curriculum Links

For each subject in the curriculum, there is a corresponding programme of activities that may include visits to specialist venues. All activities should be in line with guidance published by the Local Authority.

Residential Activities

Residential visits enable children and young people to take part in a wider range of outdoor and adventurous activities. Residential visits must only be undertaken with the endorsement of the Local Authority.

3. External Visit Co-ordinator (EVC)

The Principal will ensure that it has a trained External Visit Co-ordinator. The EVC will be involved in the planning and management of all off-site visits.

The EVC will:

- ensure that risk assessments are completed and, when appropriate, individual safety plans and safe working practices.
- support the governing body in any decision on approval.

- assign competent staff to lead and help with trips.
- verify that all accompanying adults have been DBS checked if required.
- make sure that all consent and medical forms are obtained.
- keep records of visits and provide after-visit evaluation to aid future visits.

The school's trained EVC is:

Jane Hutton and Christine Cornish

4. How Visits Are Authorised

Staff proposing to arrange an off-site activity must seek and obtain the approval of the Vice Principal, in advance, before any commitment is made on behalf of the school.

Category A Visits/Activities

Approval for Category A visits and activities, has been delegated by the Governing Body to the EVC. *Governors must review delegation arrangements annually as part of Health and Safety Policy for school.*

Category B Visits/Activities

Approval for Category B visits or activities must be obtained from the Governing Body and the Principal before they take place. Endorsement is also required from the Outdoor Education Adviser for the Local Authority.

Classification of External Visits:

Categories A, B and C (Duke of Edinburgh Award) visits and activities, Notification, Approval and Endorsement clarification is available in the Outdoor Education and External Visits Website or via the link below:

<https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/sccoea/default.aspx>

Planning a Visit or Activity

The Visit Leader must ensure that the visit or activity is planned in advance and within submission time to ensure approval is granted.

When planning Category A activities, a record of the trip or activity should be held on the European Education Consultants website.

Category B and C activities should be carried out using the European Education Consultants (EEC) Health and Safety Management system for Risk and Educational Visit management as the system provides on-line approval for the establishment's EVC and Local Authority endorsement.

Link to EEC:

<https://www.eeclive.co.uk/public/plogon.asp?aid=14>

Link to Outdoor Education and External Visits Website:

<https://slp.somerset.gov.uk/sccoea/default.aspx>

Visit Plan – held on EEC

The visit plan for intended visits must include the following:

- risk assessments for transport, site of visit and activities;
- curriculum objectives
- supervision/pupil ratios
- itinerary
- supervisory details
- emergency contact details.

Risk Assessment

All relevant risk assessments must be carried out by the Visit Leader before any proposed visit or activity takes place. Existing risk assessments should be checked to ensure that they are still suitable and sufficient.

Generic risk assessments are produced by the EVC and/or competent staff for use by all staff members and these are reviewed regularly.

EEC provides comprehensive frameworks for venues and activities and should be used for visit/activity planning. Support is offered to staff that do not have the relevant skills to produce a risk assessment. For more complex activities and visits, support is available from the Health and Safety Department at Somerset County Council.

The EVC checks that all risk assessments are in place before an activity/visit is authorised.

A copy of the risk assessment or safe working procedures is to be given to all adults supervising the visit/activity.

Transport

Risk assessments must be carried out for the mode of transport. When hiring a coach or minibus, only use companies that have been endorsed by Transporting Somerset.

If using a self-drive minibus whether, owned, leased or hired, drivers must have received training within the last four years through Transporting Somerset. Please contact the Driver Training Coordinator on 01823 358133 for further information.

If using staff vehicles, ensure that Driver Risk Assessment (F14a) has been completed before visit.

Using vehicles belonging to parents is discouraged. If, however, the decision is made to use a parent's vehicle the driver risk assessment (F14a) must be completed and a DBS check performed before the visit/activity takes place.

Communication with Parents

The parents of young people taking part in an off-site activity should be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit. Parents must give their permission in writing or via the parent pay website before a child can be involved in any off-site activities.

5. Further Health and Safety Considerations

Adults accompanying the group(s) on the visit/activity must be informed of the emergency procedures by the Visit Leader and provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the establishment number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day, the telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

The School/establishment Office to be provided with a list of everyone, pupils and adults, travelling with the group, together with a copy of the itinerary for the activity (print out of the summary sheet from software).

The safety of the group(s), especially the pupils, is of paramount importance. During the activity, the Visit Leader must take whatever steps are necessary to ensure that safety. This involves taking note of any information provided by medical questionnaire returns, and ensuring that pupils are both safe, well and looked after at all times.

Prior to an activity, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual pupil is likely to compromise the safety of others, the Visit Leader should discuss with the Principal measures to put in place to enable the pupil to take part, especially if part of the curriculum. An example of these measures could be an Individual Safety Plan supporting extra supervision.

6. Monitoring and Review

This policy is monitored by the appropriate Business Committee of the Governing Body and will be reviewed every two years, or before if necessary.

Signed: Date:

7. Further Guidance and Help

- Health & Safety Executive: School trips and outdoor learning activities
- <http://www.hse.gov.uk/services/education/school-trips.pdf>

Appendix 1

Visit Leaders Check List

Must Do:

- Complete the purpose of visit and clear educational objectives.
- Check any relevant, generic, risk assessments and share with visit supervisors.*
- Any required new risk assessments to be completed and shared with visit supervisors.
- All supervisors to be listed and appear in the ratio box.
- All attendee numbers to be recorded in the ratio box.
- All attendee numbers, age, gender and Key Stage to be entered in the purpose of visit and educational objectives area (main area).
- Ensure both the insurance box and the category of visit is selected.
- Itinerary to be completed for each stage and time and dates to be consecutive.
- Emergency contact number to be recorded for the visit - home and away.
- The visit must be submitted within the specified time period.
- Check the communications page to ensure that information is recorded and actions taken.

***NB:** Risk assessments should be completed for each activity and in most cases they will be generic. Regular activities, e.g. Coach Travel should be reviewed on an annual basis by the health and safety co-ordinator.

Visit Leaders need to ensure that they have looked at the relevant risk assessments for the activity and shared them with all supervisors who are involved – it will NOT require reviewing or completing a new one for each visit.

Should Do:

(Helpful to trip planners in the future)

Add links to information regarding the trip to be found on your school web site

Add the location of documents regarding the trip to be found within your school into the documents page.

Add your required risk assessments to an action plan via the assessment page.

On return rate your external provider and add comments on their performance by visiting the Provider details

On return rate your transport operator and add comments on their performance by visiting the Operator details