

Educational Visits Policy

Reviewed December 2018 (incorporating new DFE Guidance)

1 Introduction

- 1.1 This policy applies to all academies which are part of the Focus-Trust. The policy is intended to help academy leaders and their staff to plan an off-site visit.
- 1.2 It is not permissible for any visit to proceed unless:
- the correct procedure has been followed as outlined in this policy;
 - the correct risk assessments are in place and have been shared by those leading the visit;
 - the details of the visit have been logged on the Evolve system;
 - the Principal has given express permission for the visit to take place; and
 - the leader takes the appropriate paperwork and records with them on the visit.
- 1.3 The Focus-Trust recognises the significant value of off-site learning. Educational visits offer fantastic opportunities for both pupils and staff and they are most successful when they have been well planned. The benefits are:
- Enjoyment
 - Providing experiences which enrich learning and stimulate future learning & progress
 - Raise achievement by boosting self-esteem and motivation
 - Develop key skills
 - Develop social education and citizenship
 - Promote health and fitness

2 Document storage and retention

- 2.1 All visit information should be kept for a minimum of six years however, if there have been any problems on a visit (like an accident) this should be kept forever, plus the visit leader must fill in the academy accident book on the return as a health and safety requirement.
- 2.2 All academies within the Focus-Trust use the Evolve online system for the storage, retention and authorisation of educational visits. No visit should go ahead unless it is authorised via this system. The system is in place to safeguard all parties and ensures that the correct procedure is followed.
- 2.3 Any personal information retained will be dealt with correctly and securely and in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998, the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) 2018 and other related legislation.

3 Roles

- 3.1 There are distinct roles which need to be clear throughout the process of arranging and participating in an educational visit.
- 3.2 Focus-Trust (exercised on behalf of Chief Executive or his/her representative)
- Final approval of all residential visits, visits involving outdoor and adventurous activities, visits involving water associated risk and/or visits outside the UK.
 - Spot check compliance with the policy and use of Evolve system.
- 3.3 Principal

- Authorisation of all educational visits which take place including those which are residential and/or involving outdoor and adventurous activity. No visit may proceed without the authorisation of the Principal.
- Decide whether the academy will have a named member of staff acting as the EVC. In the absence of an EVC the Principal takes this role by default.

3.4 Educational visits co-ordinator (EVC)

- Advise staff on the process of arranging educational visits.
- Authorise visits prior to Principal authorisation (if in place within the academy).

Schools should appoint an educational visits coordinator and make sure they have the training they need. The headteacher has this duty if there is no coordinator. Local authorities or academy trust outdoor education advisers can advise on appointing and training coordinators.

The coordinator works with the local outdoor education adviser to help their colleagues in schools to assess and manage risks.

The coordinator should:

- be an experienced visits leader
- have the status to be able to guide the working practices of other staff
- be confident in assessing the ability of other staff to lead visits
- be confident in assessing outside activity providers
- be able to advise headteachers and governors when they're approving trips
- have access to training, advice and guidance

Coordinators can also get guidance on the [OEAP website](#).

3.5 Visit leader

- Complete the visit planning and risk assessment process.
- Log all details and risk assessments logged on the Evolve system.
- Ensure that the visit complies with the requirements of this policy.
- Only proceed with the visits following authorisation from the Principal.
- Ensure that all adults assisting with the visit are briefed and provided with relevant safety and safeguarding information.
- Has overall responsibility for the visit.
- Review the visit to advise the Principal of learning points for future visits.

4 Categories of visit

4.1 Routine visits

These involve no more than an everyday level of risk, such as slips and trips and are covered by a school's current policies and procedures. They only need a little extra planning beyond the educational aspect of the trip. They can be considered as lessons in a different classroom.

4.2 Trips that need a risk assessment and extra planning

These are trips not covered by current policies. This could be due to things like:

- the distance from school
- the type of activity
- the location
- needing staff with specialist skills

Sometimes a school may just need to review its current plans or arrangements that were successful on previous trips. However, some trips will need risk assessments, detailed planning and informed approval of headteachers or governing boards. The person given the job of managing this should:

- have the [skills, status and competence needed for the job](#)
- understand the risks involved
- be familiar with the activity

Plans should be proportionate and sensible, focusing on how to manage genuine risks

Categories of visit:

Category	Description	Authorisation	Notice period
Category A Routine visits	- Planned day visits	Authorised by the Principal	Authorisation must be granted at least 15 school days before the date of the visit
	- Visits in the locality	Authorised by the Principal	Deemed by the Principal
Category B Trips that need a risk assessment And extra planning	- Overnight stays. Involving outdoor and adventurous activities. - Activities must be planned and risk assessed ahead of the visit. Staff must not decide to add them whilst on the visit	Authorised by the Principal. Final authorisation from Chief Executive of Focus-Trust (or his/her representative).	Authorisation must be granted at least 30 school days before the date of the visit
Category C Adventure activities	- Caving, climbing trekking - Must be led by licenced providers	Authorised by the Principal. Final authorisation from Chief Executive of Focus-Trust (or his/her representative).	Authorisation must be granted at least 30 school days before the date of the visit
Category D Watersports	- Involving water associated risk. - Consider the need for instructors, lifeguards	Authorised by the Principal. Final authorisation from Chief Executive of Focus-Trust (or his/her representative).	Authorisation must be granted at least 30 school days before the date of the visit
Category E Trips abroad	- Outside UK. Providers must have LOtCQuality badge or similar local accreditation.	Authorised by the Principal. Final authorisation from Chief Executive of Focus-Trust (or his/her representative).	Contact Focus Trust a year in advance of planning the visit to seek initial approval

Further details

Schools using an outside organisation to provide an activity must check they have appropriate safety standards and liability insurance.

The Council for Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) awards the [Learning Outside the Classroom Quality Badge](#) to organisations who meet nationally recognised standards. Schools can [check if an organisation holds the LOtC Quality Badge](#).

If an organisation does not hold the badge, the school must check that they're an appropriate organisation to use. This could include checking:

- their insurance
- that they meet legal requirements
- their health and safety and emergency policies
- their risk assessments
- control measures
- their use of vehicles
- staff competence
- safeguarding
- accommodation
- any sub-contracting arrangements they have
- that they have a licence where needed

The school should have an agreement with them that makes it clear what everyone is responsible for. This is especially important if they'll be taking over supervision of the children.

Use Form EV4 to collate the above information

4. Adventure activities: caving, climbing, trekking, and watersports

These kind of activities should be identified and risk assessed as part of the visit beforehand. Staff managing or leading visits must not decide to add such activities during the trip.

Always consider the abilities of the children when assessing risk.

Organisations need a licence to provide some adventure activities. Organisations who hold the LOtC Quality Badge should hold a licence for the activity they provide.

[Find out more about licensing](#) on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.

Watersports

When planning watersports, consider the need for:

- instructors
- lifeguards

Schools should take particular care when using hotel swimming pools and other water leisure activities which may not have a trained lifeguard. Although there are no swimming pool

specific health and safety laws, the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel (OEAP) provides advice when undertaking adventure specialist activities, including swimming.

■ Trips abroad

Trips abroad can have extra risks and need a higher level of risk assessment.

Schools should make sure any organisation that is providing activities holds the LOTC Quality badge or similar local accreditation.

The HSE does not cover incidents overseas. However, it can investigate work done in Britain to support the trip, like risk assessments. School staff could also be liable under civil law for any injuries to the children due to negligence.

If the trip includes significant risks, such as challenging terrain, going to remote places or extreme climates, follow the guide to the [British Standard for adventurous activities outside the United Kingdom](#) as the basis for the planning and risk assessment. Organisations employed by the school should follow this too. If they have LOTC Quality Badge then they follow this standard. Schools should consider the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's detailed guidance on [safer adventure travel and volunteering overseas](#) when organising adventure visits abroad. A [teachers' pack](#) is also available.

5 The process

- 5.1 Before any visit can go ahead the first step is to obtain a preliminary permission from the Principal.
- 5.2 Make arrangements for the visit, including travel. Calculate costs to check that the visit is viable.
- 5.3 Undertake risk assessments.
- 5.4 For residential and/or those involving visits to a pre-planned activity centre, use EV2 as a means of seeking verification that the centre has all the necessary controls and checks in place.
- 5.5 For residential visits use EV3 as a checklist. This should be logged on Evolve. This proforma may also be useful for staff who are inexperienced in planning day visits.
- 5.6 Log details on Evolve system and receive authorisation.
- 5.7 Draft letter to parents/carers (this can use template EV1). The letter should be checked by the Principal before being distributed to parents/carers. Decide whether a separate permission slip is required or whether the visit is within the scope of the standard slip which should be in place for every pupil in the academy.
- 5.8 Notify the academy kitchen if there will be an impact on meals. Any pupil that is entitled to free school meals should have a packed lunch made for the day of the visit.

- 5.9 Use EV4 (adapted to meet the needs of the pupils) to ensure that pupils have a clear understanding of expectations.
- 5.10 Complete EV5 and ensure that a copy is taken by the group leader, a copy left with the Principal and a copy logged on Evolve.

6 When to get consent from parents

A school must always get written consent for nursery age children.

For children over nursery age, written consent is not needed for most trips, as they're part of the curriculum. However, it's good practice to tell parents about them.

Written consent is usually only needed for trips that:

- need a higher level of risk assessment
- are outside normal school hours

Ask parents to sign a copy of [our consent form](#) when their child enrolls. This will cover them for their whole time at the school.

Schools should still tell parents about these trips and give them the opportunity to withdraw their child.

7. Risk assessment

6.1 A risk assessment is a dynamic living process - not a piece of paper filed away somewhere. It should go with you on the trip. The risk assessment is a careful examination of what, in the course of your work, could cause harm to people. The aim of the risk assessment is to make sure no one gets hurt. To make the risk assessments 'live' involve pupils.

6.2 Every risk assessment must cover five elements:

- Identify the significant hazards
- Decide who may be harmed and how
- Evaluate the extent of the risk and decide whether control measures are adequate or more should be done
- Record significant findings
- Monitor and review

7 Safeguarding

7.1 All adults accompanying pupils on a residential visit should be CRB/DBS checked at enhanced level and their details recorded on the academy's single central record. It is essential to have male and female staff or responsible adults on residential.

7.2 It is the responsibility of the Principal to risk assess the adults assisting on a day visit. There is no formal requirement for volunteers to be CRB/DBS checked. However, if there is a possibility that any volunteer will have unsupervised access to pupils they must have a disclosure at enhanced level.

8 Practicalities

8.1 The group leader should ensure that they have the necessary equipment on a visit, e.g. first aid kit, change of clothes, sickness kit etc.

- 8.2 Where more than one vehicle is being used to transport the party the group leader is responsible for leaving a list with the Principal of which adults and pupils will travel on each vehicle before departing. For the avoidance of doubt, the vehicles should be labelled A, B, C etc. This is a safeguard in case of an accident so that the Principal can be clear about who is travelling in each vehicle. This information will be shared with the emergency services.
- 8.3 The group leader is responsible for ensuring that systems are put in place for regularly checking the attendance of every pupil.
- 8.4 Whenever possible, it is good practice to have male and female staff or responsible adults accompanying a visit.

9 Ratios

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal to ensure that s/he is satisfied that the ratio of pupils:adults is acceptable. This will vary depending on a range of factors, e.g. age of pupils, number of pupils with additional needs, type of location being visited etc. The following ratios will apply as an absolute minimum and a teacher must be included in the ratios for whole class visits:

Nursery/Reception: 1 adult to 4 children
 Years 1 – 3: 1 adult to 6 children
 Years 4 – 6: 1 adult to 10 or 15 children

In exceptional circumstances, the Principal has the discretion to amend the ratios. They must ensure that s/he is satisfied that the ratio of pupils:adults is acceptable and must accept full responsibility for the visit.

10 Cost

- 10.1 See Charging Policy for details of voluntary contributions ref educational visits.

Title	Educational visits policy
Aim	To provide a consistent policy position the planning of educational visits
Related documents	Health and safety policy EV1 Visit notification template for parents EV2 Provider questionnaire EV3 Residential checklist EV4 Pupil information sheet EV5 Emergency contact form
Date for implementation	22.05.13
Approved by	Trust board 21.03.2013 Reviewed May 2014 Reviewed August 2016 Reviewed December 2018
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