

Community Inclusive Trust **Educational Visits Co-ordinator Policy (EVC)**

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Purpose

The Community Inclusive Trust Directors and Principal are committed to ensuring pupils will experience a wide range of activities. Off-site visits and related activities are a valuable part of their education and the Trust fully support and encourage those that are well planned and managed.

To follow best practice, C.I.T adopts the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel 'National Guidance': www.oeapng.info and ensures that all staff have access and understand the content for Visit Leaders. In the event of a discrepancy between this Policy and NG, the detail in this Policy will take precedence.

A common-sense approach will be used in assessing and managing the risks of any activity. We consider that it is important for children to learn to understand and manage the risks that are a normal part of life. Health and Safety measures must always be proportionate to the risks of an activity.

Scope

The EVC and Visit Leaders must familiarise themselves with this policy.

Staff will be given the training they need so they can keep themselves and children safe and manage risks effectively.

The Principal, Heads of School and Governors are committed to the following:

- Risk assessment will focus attention on real risks, not risks that are trivial or fanciful;
- Proportionate systems and procedures are in place and followed to ensure that trips presenting lower-risk activities are quick and easy to organise, and higher-risk activities (such as those involving climbing, caving or water-based activities) are properly planned and assessed;
- Those planning the trips are properly supported to ensure that teachers can readily check if they have taken sufficient precautions or whether they should do more.

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Teachers should read the following statements, which are fully supported by the Trust and its schools and are reflected in this policy:

“HSE fully supports schools arranging a wide range of out-of-school activities, which can include visits to museums, trips to the countryside or taking part in challenging and adventurous activities. HSE wants to make sure that mistaken and unfounded health and safety concerns do not create obstacles that prevent these from happening.”

“HSE fully recognises that learning outside the classroom helps to bring the curriculum to life – it provides deeper subject learning and increases self-confidence. It also helps pupils develop their risk awareness and prepares them for their future working lives. Striking the right balance between protecting pupils from risk and allowing them to learn from school trips has been a challenge for many schools, but getting this balance right is essential for realising all these benefits in practice”.

Statement from HSE “School Trips & Outdoor Learning Activities” June 2011.

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Section 2 Arrangements

2.1 Aims and purposes of Educational Visits

Each year the Trust schools will arrange a number of activities that take place off the site and/or out of normal hours, which support the learning and achievement aims of the Trust. The range of activities are outlined in the Trust/schools' prospectus along with the criteria by which pupils are able to join in them and the methods by which parents will be notified and asked for their consent.

Within each curricular programme of work the staff plan educational visits and activities that support the pupils' learning. We plan activities in advance and inform parents of these in due course.

2.2 Role of the Educational Visits Coordinator

To ensure that the planning and approval of offsite visits are structured, and to help fulfil its health and safety obligations for visits, each academy will appoint an Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC).

The EVC is specifically competent, with practical experience in leading and managing a range of visits similar to those typically run by the school. The EVC will be trained as necessary.

The EVC will support the school in ensuring that competent staff are assigned to lead and accompany visits.

Where a suitably trained EVC is not in place the Head Teacher will take on this role until a member of staff is identified and trained.

2.3 Approval Procedure and Consent

The Trust uses an online database system for notification and approval called Exeant. A key feature of this system is that visits and LOtC activities requiring approval are automatically brought to the attention of the Trust. These are residential visits, overseas visits, and activities that include an adventurous activity. Those visits and activities not requiring approval may be viewed sampled or monitored, by the Trust using the database and diary facilities of the system.

Visits requiring approval by The Community Inclusive Trust should be submitted at eight weeks prior to the day of the visit wherever possible. ***However, in the case of any overseas visits, complex visits such as expeditions abroad or visits that have a high financial risk, it is essential that pre-approval is sought before any contract is signed with the provider and before any financial transactions are made.***

For further advice and help using the Exeant system, the academy should contact the nominated officer.

The nominated officer in the Community Inclusive Trust is:

Claire Buffham

Tel: 03300 585 520

Mobile: 07860 503283

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Before a visit is advertised to parents, the Head of School must approve the initial plan. The Educational Visits Co-ordinator ensures the visit document pack is complete. In approving visits the Head of School and EVC will ensure that the Visit Leader has been appropriately inducted/trained, and is competent to lead the visit.

Responsibility for sign-off of the completed plan and risk assessments (where applicable) will depend on the type of visit as follows:

Visit Type	Approval Required By
'Ad hoc' Activities – local, regular and routine visits	EVC or Head of School
Activities involving travel within 5 miles of the school - local, regular and routine visits	EVC or Head of School
Activities involving Travel in the UK beyond 5 miles of the school	Head of School
Overseas Visits	External Consultant (Dave Barham)
Residential Visits	Director of Education
Visits which include Adventurous Activities led by an External Provider	Head of School
Visits which include Adventurous Activities led by a Member of Staff	Head of School

See Section 5 (5.1) for the definition of an Adventurous Activity.

If possible, an exploratory visit should be made to the planned venue. If this is not practicable alternative arrangements will be made to gain as much knowledge of the site as possible by liaising with officials at the site or seeking advice from colleagues who have made previous visits. Site officials will be asked for copies of specific site risk assessments and emergency arrangements.

Where external providers are involved in organising all or part of the visit the contract will be made with the specific School on behalf of the pupils.

2.4 Parent or Carer Consent

Written consent from parents is not required for pupils to take part in the majority of off-site activities organised by the School as most of these activities take place during school hours and are a normal part of a child's education at school. However, parents will be told where their child will be at all times and of any extra safety measures required.

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Written consent is only required for activities that need a higher level of risk management or those that take place outside school hours.

Parents will be asked to sign a general consent form when their child enters the School. (The School has adopted the *Department for Education's* "one-off" consent form sign when a child enrolls at the school.) This covers participation in adventure activities, off-site sporting fixtures outside the school day, residential visits which take place at any time (including during school holidays or at the weekend).

Parents will be told in advance of each activity and given the opportunity to withdraw their child from a particular activity or trip. They will also be given the timetable for the activities that pupils are involved in and will be informed (by letter/phone call/through their son/daughter) if an activity has to be cancelled. For all residential visits, parents will be invited to a briefing meeting where they can ask for clarification of any aspect of the itinerary and organisation of the visit.

2.5 Approval of Staff to Lead an Adventurous Activity

What is and what is not an 'Adventurous Activity' is set out in Section 5(5.1).

Approval will normally be given where the leader of the activity has recent relevant experience, and:

- is appropriately qualified through the relevant National Governing Body, **or**
- has a 'Statement of Competence' from an appropriate 'technical adviser'

For most activities, the competence required of a 'technical adviser' is stipulated by the activity's National Governing Body.

In some cases, approval may be granted where no qualification is held, but the person concerned is deemed by the school to have a sufficient level of competence in addition to recent relevant experience.

In cases where no National Governing Body exists, the School will make a decision based on factors which may include: technical advice, the leader's stated competence, observed competence, past experience, and attendance at training courses.

Approval will always be subject to a requirement that the leader must act at all times within the remit of his/her qualifications, and in accordance with National Governing Body Guidelines where these exist.

Approval to lead an adventurous activity is specific to the technical aspects of the adventurous activity detailed. It is not an indication in respect of other aspects of the visit such as general management and supervision skills, the assessment of which will be the responsibility of the Principal, EVC or relevant Head of School.

2.6 Using an External Provider

An 'External Provider' is one that provides an element of instruction, staffing, or guiding, for example:

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- Activity Centre;
- Ski Company;
- Educational Tour Operator;
- Overseas Expedition Provider;
- Climbing Wall where instruction is provided by climbing wall staff;
- Freelance instructor of adventurous activities;
- Youth Hostel (where instruction is provided);
- Voluntary organisation (e.g. Scout Association), where instruction is provided.

The decision about the use of an external provider is the responsibility of the Visit Leader, Principal or EVC.

To confirm that all aspects of the operation of the provider are satisfactory, the school will ensure that either:

- a) The Provider holds a *Learning Outside the Classroom* (LOtC) Quality Badge, or
- b) A 'Risk Assessment' has been satisfactorily completed by the provider

(If a Provider holds an *Adventure Activities Licensing Authority* (AALA) license (or any other accreditation) but not a LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.)

For Providers that hold a LOtC Quality Badge no further action is necessary, other than to check the suitability of the provider/venue in relation to the intended aims or learning outcomes for the particular group.

2.7 The expectations of Pupils and Parents

The Trust has a clear code of conduct for educational visits based on the School 'Behaviour Policy'. This code of conduct will be part of the condition of booking by the parents and include the potential of withdrawal of a student prior to or during the visit if such conduct places a child or children at risk and would have led to a temporary exclusion from their School.

Section 3 Management of Educational Visits

3.1 Guidance for Visit Leaders

The Trust is responsible for health and safety, though tasks may be delegated to individual School staff. Employees also have a duty to look after their own and others' health and safety.

The Trust as employers, school staff and others also have a duty under the common law to take care of pupils in the same way that a prudent parent would do so.

Visit Leaders will be selected by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator and be given overall responsibility for the preparation, supervision and conduct of the visit. They should be of sufficient seniority to direct other accompanying staff.

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The Visit Leader must ensure that they have followed Trust/School procedures, suitably manage the visit and provide all information required for the specific activity.

The information required will vary dependent on the trip. This will include the following for low-risk educational visits:

- Providing venue details or/and being familiar with the visit location and centre;
- Ensuring that all those accompanying the trip understand child protection issues (may include parent helper);
- General details of the activity for parents and pupils (a letter to parents);
- Assess the pupils on the trip to ensure all specific medical needs are considered;
- Liaising with the location/centre to inform them that a visit is planned for a specific date;
- Ensuring that the Educational Visits Co-ordinator is suitably notified in order that transport can be organised (if required).

Additional information and procedures are required for higher risk, out of hour's visits and residential trips. This may include the following:

- Parental consent forms;
- Specific risk assessments of the activity/trip;
- A completed Risk Assessment if the external provider is not in possession of a *Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) Quality Badge*.
- Risk assessments from the centre or activity provider, where necessary;
- Emergency contact details for pupils;
- A suitability assessment of those pupils potentially completing visit (consideration for those with special educational needs).

3.2 Accompanying Staff and Volunteers must:

- Follow the instructions of the Visit Leader;
- Help to maintain control and discipline;
- Be prepared to stop any activity if they feel the risk to health and safety is unacceptable;
- Not be left in sole charge of pupils except where it has been previously agreed as part of the risk assessment;
- Inform the Visit Leader if concerned about the health and safety of pupils during the visit.

3.3 Competence of Visit Leaders

The competence of the Visit Leader is the single most important contributory factor in the safety of participants. The EVC and/or Head of School will consider the following when assessing the competence of a member of staff to lead a visit:

- What experience has the leader in leading or accompanying similar or other visits?
- Has the Visit Leader undertaken formal Visit Leader Training?
- Is the leader competent in planning and managing visits?
- What are the leader's reasons for undertaking the visit?
- Does the leader have the ability to manage the pastoral welfare of participants?

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- Does the leader exhibit sound decision-making abilities?
- What experience has the leader of the participants he/she intends to supervise?
- What experience has the leader of the environment and geographical area chosen?
- Does the leader possess appropriate qualifications?
- If appropriate, what is the leader's personal level of skill in the activity, and fitness level?
- Is the leader aware of all relevant guidelines and able to act on these?

3.4 Planning

Planning should reflect the consideration of legal and good practice requirements, ensuring:

- The plan is based on Academy procedures and employer guidance.
- All staff (including any adult volunteer helpers) and the young people to be involved have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities, including their role in the risk management process;
- Those in a position of parental authority have been fully informed and, where appropriate, formal consents have been obtained;
- Proportionate assurances have been obtained from any providers (making full use of national schemes that accredit that assurances have already been obtained by credible inspection regimes);
- Designated emergency contact(s) have been identified that will work on a 24/7 basis where required;
- All details of the activity provision are accessible to the emergency contact throughout the period of the activity.

It is strongly recommended that at a very early stage of the planning process, the provisional staffing team carry out a brainstorming exercise in order to identify the benefits and learning outcomes that the activity (or range of activities) might or are intended to achieve. If the outcomes are to be evaluated with any rigour (an Ofsted expectation), then it will be essential that these outcomes are prioritised, and appropriately targeted. A record of these outcomes will help keep the plan focused and also be a vital part of the risk management process in providing some objectivity in a "Risk-Benefit Analysis". Once the targeted outcomes have been recorded, it will then be possible to identify appropriate on-going review and evaluation strategies, including indicators.

To reduce bureaucracy and encourage activity, academies need to take account of the legalities regarding a requirement for formal consent. When an activity is part of a planned curriculum in normal curriculum time and no parental contributions are requested, then a formal consent is not necessary. However, in the interests of good relations between the academy and the home, it is good practice to ensure that those in a position of parental responsibility are fully informed. Consent forms are often used to update parents/carers current phone numbers, contact details plus any medical conditions which have developed since the last check.

This supports the move towards developing activity-specific policies at Academy level for regular or routine activities. Such policies should be robust and equate to "operational guidance" that makes it clear how the activity should be planned and delivered, meeting all necessary recommendations and requirements, as well as assuring educational quality.

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The degree of complexity of a particular plan or policy (along with its supporting procedures) will need to reflect the nature and complexity of several variables that can impact on any given activity. These variables can be remembered as “SAGED” as explained below.

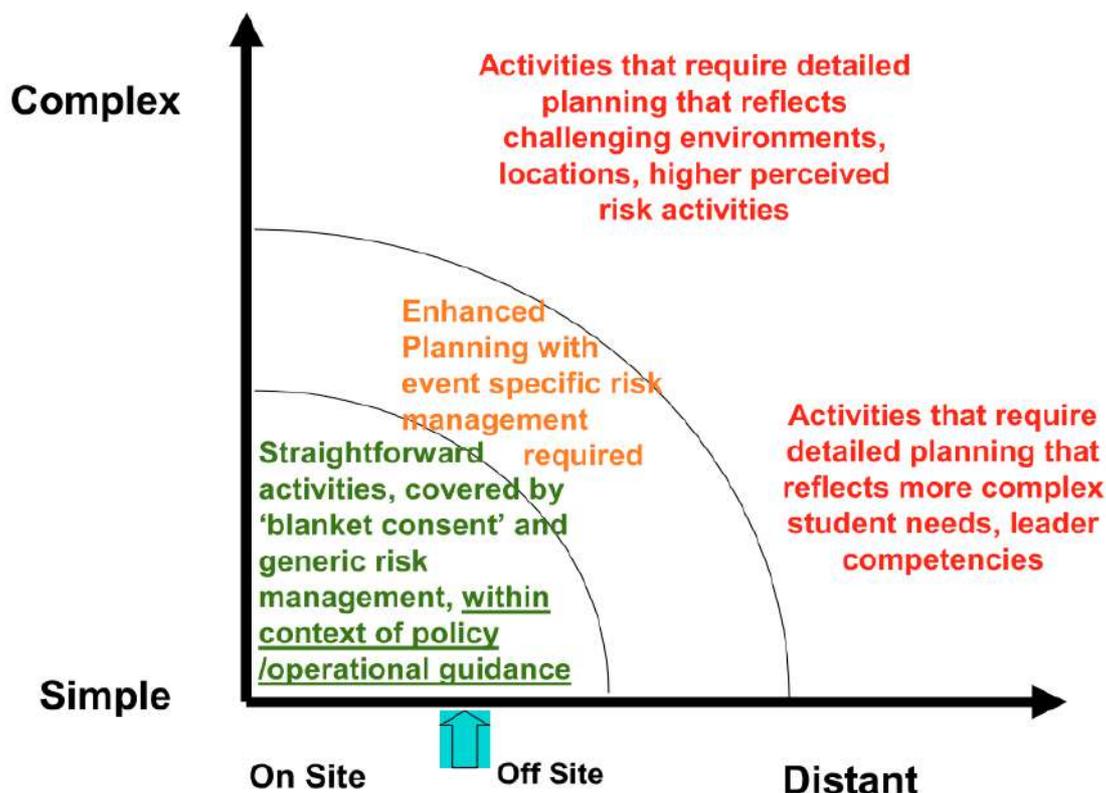
1. Staffing requirements – trained? experienced? competent? ratios?
2. Activity characteristics – specialist? insurance issues? licensable?
3. Group characteristics – prior experience? ability? behaviour? special and medical needs?
4. Environmental conditions – like last time? impact of weather? water levels?
5. Distance from support mechanisms in place at the home base – transport? residential?

Refer to OEAP NG document: [“Planning Basics for Outdoor Learning, Off-Site Visits and LOtC”](#)

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3.5 Safety during the Visit

Prior to the visit, staff must ensure that all participants understand what is expected of them. This includes any 'rules' that will be in place. These should be re-emphasised as appropriate during the visit.

Monitoring of the visit must be ongoing, and this contributes towards both enjoyment and safety.

It is primarily the responsibility of the Visit Leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity to suit changed or changing circumstances. Following the visit, the Visit Leader should record any significant issues both for reference and to inform future visits.

3.6 Staffing/Supervision

The Trust and its schools' recognise the key role of accompanying staff in ensuring the highest standards of learning, challenge and safety on a visit. The selection of staff for educational visits will be a key priority in the initial approval of any proposed visit.

On all visits there must be an 'effective level of supervision' that has been approved by the EVC and Head of School, and where applicable the Trust Board.

Staffing ratios will vary according to the activity, age, group, location and resources. Ratios should not be finalised until the general assessment of the activity is complete. Lower risk activities may require lower staff to student ratios.

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Residential visits and adventure activities will require higher levels of supervision and all accompanying staff and volunteers must be Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checked (formerly CRB).

For all other visits, the Visit Leader, EVC and Head of School must make a professional judgement regarding the number and suitability of staffing on an individual visit basis, after consideration of the following factors:

- the type, level, and duration of activity;
- the nature and requirements of individuals within the group, including those with additional needs;
- the experience and competence of staff and other adults;
- the venue, time of year and prevailing/predicted conditions;
- the contingency options.

A visit must not go ahead where the Visit Leader, EVC, or Head of School is not satisfied that an appropriate level of supervision exists.

Staff who are assigned to support the special needs of an individual, cannot be included in the overall staffing ratio. Their responsibility should not include the wider group.

Visit Leaders will also need to consider the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities. Known behaviours, learning and physical needs should also be taken into account.

The Visit Leader should discuss this with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator to ensure any judgement is proportionate and not prohibitive.

Supervision Ratios

In general terms, the Law does not prescribe activity-specific staffing ratios; but it does require that the level of supervision and group management is “effective”.

Ratios are a risk management issue and should be determined through the process of risk assessment. It is not possible to set down definitive staff/student ratios for a particular age group or activity.

Exchange Parties: Staff organising exchanges should send a list of host families to the Child Protection Co-ordinator for his/her information. This is to ensure that we do not place a visiting youngster in a home which is potentially unsuitable.

All groups must be led by a competent adult employed by the school.

Particular consideration should be given to the additional implications that may arise if staff are to be accompanied by family members (or partners) on visits.

Remote Supervision: Young people must be supervised throughout all visits. Where they are unaccompanied by a member of staff or other responsible adults, e.g. DofE expeditions, ‘down time’ in a shopping mall, etc., this is known as ‘remote’ supervision. ‘Remotely supervised’ activities can bring purposeful educational benefits, and the progression from dependence to independence is to be encouraged. Such activities develop

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essential lifelong skills, including managing risk, self-sufficiency, interaction with the public and social skills, decision making, etc.

In addition to considering the benefits of the activity, staff should also ensure that reasonably practicable safety precautions are taken.

The decision to allow remote supervision should be based on professional judgement taking into account such factors as:

- prior knowledge of the individuals (including their maturity and levels of responsibility);
- venue and conditions;
- the activity taking place;
- preparatory training;
- the competence of the supervising staff;
- the emergency systems in place.

The EVC and Visit Leaders must familiarise themselves with this EVC policy.

Teachers and other staff are encouraged and supported to develop their abilities in organising and managing pupils' learning in a variety of environments through induction and training.

Where it is appropriate, the School will ensure that DBS screening is available for volunteer adults assisting with educational activities and visits.

The appointed Visit Leader will be fully supported in the tasks required to arrange the visit.

This will include, as necessary, making time or finances available to conduct an exploratory visit (if practical and necessary), briefing teachers and other staff, accessing training courses, reviewing and evaluating the visit or identifying time when the leader and EVC might work in partnership to undertake planning and risk assessments (if applicable).

3.7 Risk Assessment

Health and Safety law requires the employer to assess the risks to the health and safety of staff and others affected by their activities. The terms risk assessment and risk management are used to describe the process of thinking about the risks of any activity and the steps taken to counter them. Sensible management of risk does not mean that a separately written risk assessment is required for every activity. However, risk assessment is a dynamic, practical activity, informed by a previously conducted and recorded assessment.

Local, regular and routine visits will usually be managed through a generic risk assessment understanding operational procedures and staff will risk assess dynamically throughout the visit.

The School will take a common sense and proportionate approach, remembering that risk assessment and risk management are tools to enable children to undertake activities safely, and not prevent activities from taking place. Sensible risk management cannot remove risk altogether but it should avoid needless or unhelpful paperwork.

Some activities, especially those happening away from the School, can involve higher levels of risk. If these are annual or infrequent activities, a review of an existing assessment may be all that is needed. If it is a new activity, a specific assessment of significant risks must be carried out.

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The Head of School in conjunction with the Educational Visits Co-ordinator will ensure that the person assigned with the assessment task understands the risks and is familiar with the activity that is planned. Where a risk assessment is carried out the Visit Leader must record the significant findings of the assessment.

A written risk assessment record is not required every time an activity is undertaken that usually forms part of the school day, for example, taking pupils to a local venue which is frequently visited, such as a swimming pool, park, or place of worship. Any risks of these routine activities will have been considered when agreeing the school's general health and safety policies and procedures. A regular check with the educational visit co-ordinator to make sure the precautions remain suitable is all that is required.

The School requires Visit Leaders in conjunction with the educational visits co-ordinator to:

- Follow a common sense and proportionate approach to risk assessment with the focus being on significant risks;
- For higher risk activities a full risk assessment and record must be undertaken before the visit;
- Complete the school's educational visits risk assessment record (where applicable);
- Consider that risk assessment is not a one-off exercise. It is a dynamic process, the Visit Leader and other supervisors should monitor the risks throughout the visit and take appropriate action as necessary.

Visit Leaders and the Educational Visits Coordinator should note that for providers that hold a LOtC Quality Badge, activity risk assessments do not need to be completed by the School. The risk assessments pertaining to the activities organised and led by the provider have been externally assessed and they have been awarded the LOtC Quality Badge.

When planning an activity that will involve adventure activities such as caving, climbing, trekking, skiing or water sports, the Educational Visits Co-ordinator must check that the provider holds a licence as required by the Adventure Activities Licensing Regulations 2004. Such activities will be managed under the provider's risk management process. These regulations apply to adventure activities that take place in England, Scotland and Wales but these arrangements may be subject to change in the future.

3.8 Transport

When hiring buses and coaches it is essential that the company is reputable. Local Authorities can provide an up to date 'Approved Bus and Coach Operators List' to enable School to identify those operators who are able to provide vehicles and drivers to a minimum standard at all times.

The vehicle should be provided with seatbelts on all seats – with all seats forward facing, as the law requires for School trips.

If parents' or teachers' private vehicles are used the vehicles must be roadworthy and adequately insured. Documentation must be checked by the Visit Leader. All cars must be fitted with suitable child restraints. Parents must provide specific permission for their child to be transported in a private vehicle.

If public transport is used it is advisable to make party bookings in advance and ensure that the risk assessment adequately covers all potential hazards.

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3.8a Minibus Transport

The School policy is that all Drivers of School minibuses above the specified weight limit must hold a D1 License (those who obtained a license before January 1997 will have one). All those who do not have a D1 license will be required to complete a D1 license test before being permitted to drive.

Drivers will only be permitted to drive a minibus without a D1 license if the following conditions are met:

- The minibus weighs no more than 3.5 tonnes;
- The minibus has no more than 16 seats;
- The driver is over 21 years of age;
- The driver has been driving on a full license for more than 2 years;
- The driver is not specifically remunerated for driving through their contract of employment.

All drivers are required to complete a MIDAS or equivalent minibus driving training course (usually one day) before being permitted to drive.

Driver fatigue or distraction has been highlighted as a factor in recent minibus incidents nationally.

For journeys not exceeding 1 hour, a single teacher/driver **may** be considered adequate, subject to the nature of the group and the driver's ability and confidence to manage that group. For journeys involving between 1 hour and 4 hours driving, a second responsible adult should be present to supervise the group.

For journeys involving over 4 hours of driving, the second adult should be a suitably qualified minibus driver. For journeys involving over 4 hours, at least one of the drivers should have had a rest period of at least one hour prior to the start of the journey. Further regular rest periods must be taken – a 15 minute break every 2 hours is recommended.

Drivers must not drive if unwell or if on medication or receiving medical treatment which advises against driving.

Seat Belts: Pupils and staff travelling in minibuses must wear seat belts by law.

Overloading: The minibus is overloaded if the total weight (bus + fuel + passengers + luggage) exceeds the **maximum laden weight** for the vehicle. This weight is printed on the vehicle and in the handbook. For guidance, the vehicle should only carry passengers, driver and hand luggage.

The use of a trailer greatly increases the maximum laden weight and is **essential** when transporting a full load of older pupils plus luggage.

Liability for Driving an Overladen Vehicle Rests With the Driver

3.9 First Aid and Medical Needs

It is advisable that one member of the accompanying staff is first aid trained and is also able to provide any necessary support for pupils with medical needs e.g. use of epi-pen. The educational visits co-ordinator will work with the Visit Leader to ensure suitable medical/first aid cover has been provided. This will be assessed considering the activity and pupils participating.

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'Emergency First Aid' e.g. a 3 hour non-assessed course, is generally suitable for routine urban visits, however, the nature of the visit may indicate that a higher level qualification is appropriate, especially in circumstances where it is likely that access by the emergency services may be delayed.

A travel first aid kit should be carried and also details of any pupils with medical needs.

3.10 Water-Margin Activities

This section applies to activities that take place near or in water – such as a walk along a riverbank or seashore, collecting samples from ponds and streams, or paddling or walking in gentle, shallow water¹. It does not apply to swimming and other activities that require water safety or rescue qualifications and equipment, or water-going craft.

At the outset, the leader must decide whether the activity falls within the definition above – if not, guidance on 'adventurous activities' should be referred to, see Section 5.

All staff involved in water-margin activities should be conversant with the guidance contained within Group Safety at Water Margins. This document must be made available to all supervising adults in advance of the visit.

3.11 Overseas Visits

For all visits it is essential that consideration is given to the following:

- Culture: food and drink, local customs, religion, expected behaviour/dress, gender issues, sanitary arrangements, corruption, political stability, local financial information, alcohol & drugs.
- Accommodation: checked for suitability, security, safety precautions and emergency evacuation.
- Transport systems have been assessed as safe for use.

The Visit Leader should consider the relevant country information from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office website. All relevant FCO information should be circulated amongst the staff team.

For travel within the European Union (plus Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway, and Switzerland), all participants must hold a valid EHIC (European Health Insurance Card).

For exchange visits, the School has adopted the Outdoor Education Advisers' Panel guidance document: Young People's Exchange Visits

3.12 Weather, Clothing & Survival

Where appropriate, the leader must obtain and act upon recent weather forecasts and local advice.

Participants should be adequately clothed appropriate to the nature of the visit and the environment, the experience and strength of participants, the time of year and expected weather conditions, altitude and exposure to elements.

¹ 'Gentle, shallow water' is slow moving and not above the knees of the participants

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When venturing away from immediate help, leaders should consider the need for comfort, insulation and shelter for a casualty, or for the whole group, and provision of emergency food and drink etc. The need for signalling equipment and/or mobile phones and torches should also be considered.

It is primarily the responsibility of the Visit Leader, in consultation with other staff where appropriate, to modify or curtail the visit or activity to suit changed or changing circumstances, for example, over-busy lunch area, rain, rising water levels, etc.

3.13 Swimming

All swimming activities and venues must be included within the visit plan, and lifeguarding arrangements checked in advance. This is particularly important in respect of visits abroad, where for example, a hotel pool may be available.

Young people must be supervised by a competent adult at all times whilst undertaking swimming activities. The following criteria apply:

Swimming pools (lifeguarded)

UK Swimming Pool safety: Pool operators have a duty to take all reasonable and practicable measures to ensure that teaching and coaching activities are conducted safely.

For publicly lifeguarded pools abroad, the assurances must be sought that appropriate lifeguard cover is in place prior to participants entering the water.

Unless suitably qualified, the school staff should not have responsibility for lifeguarding. However, they do retain a pastoral role for participants at all times either through direct or 'remote' supervision.

For swimming lessons, the school should ensure the swimming teacher in charge or other pool employees/responsible adults supervising the participants are qualified according to current guidelines.

Hotel (and other) swimming pools

Lifeguarding² arrangements will be checked in advance of any visit.

If there is no lifeguard, swimming should only take place if there is a suitably qualified adult.

The role of the lifeguard is:

- To directly supervise the pool and the pool users, exercising appropriate levels of control. (Note: the lifeguard should remain on the poolside at all times except in the case of an emergency);
- If necessary, brief pool users in advance regarding rules (e.g. no diving, running, etc.);
- To communicate effectively with pool users;
- To anticipate problems and prevent accidents;

² A valid RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ), or equivalent in the country visited is appropriate accreditation

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- To intervene to prevent unsafe behaviour;
- To carry out a rescue from the water;
- To give immediate first aid to any casualty.

The above must be accomplished in the context of the normal operating procedures and the emergency plan for the pool, which should be considered before swimming takes place. Full familiarisation of the systems described should be walked through at the pool.

Staff must be aware of the procedures in the event of an emergency, and who at the venue will provide back up. Staff should also know if they have exclusive use of the pool, as other pool users may increase the supervision role of your lifeguard.

Open water swimming (i.e. not in a swimming pool and not a 'water-margin' activity)

Particular consideration should be given to the following factors:

- Unknown locations and hazards, especially overseas.
- Changing environmental conditions.
- Supervisor complacency.
- Adherence to local advice.
- Preparation and knowledge of young people, i.e. is it a planned activity?
- The designated lifeguard³ (open water qualified) must be dedicated exclusively to the group, and the location used must fall within the RNLI/RLSS definition of a 'safer bathing area'.
- Local advice must always be sought.

Section 4 Emergency Procedures

4.1 Introduction

Despite good planning and organisation, there may be accidents and emergencies which will require on the spot response by the Visit Leaders. Adequate provision for minor first aid must be available when the party is 'in the field' and the leader should ensure that the levels of supervision are sufficient to allow the group to be split where necessary. A School mobile phone should be available as a useful aid.

Activity Centre's should have their own emergency procedures. Details of these must be obtained in advance of the visit and compared with the recommended framework below. If there is any doubt about the safety of the arrangements the trip should not take place.

³ For free swimming activity: A valid National Beach Lifeguard Qualification (NBLQ) or equivalent in the country visited, see www.lifesavers.org.uk Note: this is for beach/sea only, not inland water. **Or**

For structured or programmed activity: A valid RLSS UK National Rescue Award for Swimming Teachers and Coaches (NRASTAC) or equivalent - see www.lifesavers.org.uk or a valid RLSS UK Water Safety Management Award (WSMA), with appropriate endorsement.

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4.2 Procedures:

Academies will appoint a member of the Senior Management Team as the emergency contact for each visit. All major incidents should immediately be relayed to the School office, the office will relay the problem to the SMT, and especially those involving injury or that might attract media attention.

The Visit Leader will leave full details of all pupils and accompanying adults on the visit with the emergency contact, including the home contact details of parents/guardians and next-of-kin. The Visit Leader will keep this list with them at all times during the trip.

The Visit Leader will also take with them a copy of the School Critical Incidents Policy.

All incidents and accidents occurring on a visit will be reported back through the School reporting systems.

The Visit Leader will complete the following:

- Establish the nature and extent of the emergency;
- Make sure all other members of the party are accounted for and safe;
- If there are injuries immediately establish their extent, so far as possible, and administer appropriate first aid;
- Establish the names of the injured and call whichever emergency services are required;
- Advise other party staff of the incident and that the emergency procedures are in operation;
- Where possible, ensure that an adult from the party accompanies the injured child/children to hospital;
- Ensure that the remainder of the party are adequately supervised throughout and arrange for their early return to School;
- Where possible arrange for one adult to remain at the incident site to liaise with emergency services until the incident is over and all pupils and staff are accounted for;
- Control access to phones until contact is made with the principal emergency contact point or designated senior member of staff and he or she has had time to contact those directly involved.
- Where possible and appropriate take photographs (these must remain confidential and be shared only with SLT and legal representatives)
- Where possible take witness statements (these must remain confidential and be shared only with SLT and legal representatives) including name address and contact details.

4.3 Give full details of the incident to the Principal or designated contact:

- Name;
- Nature, date and time of incident;
- Location of incident;
- Details of injuries;
- Names and telephone numbers of those involved;
- Action taken so far;
- Telephone number for further contact.

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4.4 Serious Incidents

Visit leaders **should not** contact families directly; it is the responsibility of the trips emergency contact to arrange for families to be contacted.

For serious incidents where the media may be involved, the Visit Leader or other party members must not discuss matters with the media. Under no circumstances should the name of any casualty be divulged to the media.

The Head of School or designated senior staff member should arrange to contact parents/carers of those involved. For a serious incident, the Principal or designated senior staff member should contact parents of all party members.

The Visit Leader should write down, as soon as practicable, all relevant details while they are still fresh in the memory. Other staff members might also be asked to do so.

A record should be kept of the names and addresses of any witnesses. Any associated equipment should be kept in its original condition.

Legal liability should not be discussed or admitted.

All accident forms should be completed as soon as possible and Insurers, the Health and Safety Executive should be informed as appropriate.

Security Concerns – consideration should be given to current national and international security concerns when planning a visit.

Section 5 Adventurous Activities

5.1 Definition of an ‘adventurous activity’

The following activities are regarded as ‘adventurous’:

- Abseiling
- Air Activities (excluding Commercial Flights)
- Boating (all other forms of Boating excluding Commercial Transport)
- Camping
- Canoeing/Kayaking
- Coastering
- ‘Extreme’ Sports
- High-Level Ropes Courses
- Hill Walking and Mountaineering
- Horse Riding
- Motor Sport – all forms
- ‘Open Country’ – all activities in ‘Open Country’ (which is normally defined as land above 300m OR more than 1km from Vehicular Access)
- Off-Road Cycling
- Rafting or Improvised Rafting
- River/Gorge Walking or Scrambling
- Rock Climbing (including Indoor Climbing Walls)
- Sailing/Windsurfing/Kite Surfing
- Shooting/Archery/Paintballing
- Snorkel and Aqualung activities

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- Snowsports (Skiing, Snowboarding and related activities)
- Swimming (all forms, excluding publicly Lifeguarded pools)
- Underground Exploration
- Use of Powered Safety/Rescue Craft
- Water Skiing
- Other activities (e.g. initiative exercises) involving skills inherent in any of the above

The following activities are **NOT** regarded as adventurous but must be supervised by a member of staff who has previous relevant experience and who in the opinion of the EVC and Head is competent to supervise the activity:

- Farm Visits
- Field Studies – unless in the Environments stated in ‘Open Country’
- Ice Skating (Rink)
- Local Traffic Survey
- Museum, Library etc.
- Pedal go-karts
- Physical Education and Sports Fixtures
- Swimming in Publicly Lifeguarded Pools
- Theme Parks
- Tourist Attractions
- Walking in Parks or non-remote Country Paths
- Water-Margin Activities ie activities that take place near or in water – such as a walk along a Riverbank or Seashore, collecting samples from Ponds and Streams or Paddling or Walking in slow-moving, shallow (typically up to the knees of the participants) water. It does not apply to swimming and other activities that require water safety or rescue qualifications and equipment, or water-going craft.

5.2 Safety during Adventurous activities

The responsibility for the safety of participants in an adventurous activity will rest with either:

a) An external provider

Any external provider must hold a LOtC Quality Badge or complete a Risk Assessment. (If a Provider holds an AALA license and/or any other accreditation but not a LOtC Quality Badge, then a Provider Form is still required.)

Whilst the responsibility for the safety of participants rests with the provider, the accompanying staff continue to retain a ‘pastoral’ duty of care.

... or

b) A member of the School’s staff who is the activity leader (this may be different to the visit leader)

5.3 Water-Based Activities

In order to participate in water-based activities, participants should normally be water confident. Participants who lack water confidence may still be able to take part subject to consideration of all factors, including the activity itself, and supervision arrangements. The level of water confidence of all participants must be known by the activity leader prior to the commencement of water-based activities.

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Leaders should have knowledge of the water conditions/hazards (and potential changes) that might be encountered and prepare accordingly. Local advice must be sought where appropriate, e.g. coastguard, harbour master, other site users, etc.

Personal buoyancy conforming to the appropriate National Governing Body guidance must be worn at all times by all participants in water-based activities, except, at the discretion of the activity leader, where the activity:

- a) takes place in a swimming pool, or
- b) is 'swimming', or
- c) is an activity for which personal buoyancy would not normally be worn by young people.

5.4 Open-country activities

The following minimum levels of technical competence apply where a member of the establishment's own staff intends to lead an open-country activity:

- a) For leaders of walking groups in mountainous terrain within the UK and Ireland:
 - Mountain Leader Award (Summer or Winter as appropriate) www.mltuk.org, or
 - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser
- b) For leaders of walking groups in summer conditions in non-mountainous hilly terrain (known variously as upland, moor, bog, hill, fell or down), with well-defined obvious boundaries, such as roads and coastlines, and where any hazards within it are identifiable and avoidable, and where wild camping or movement on steep ground is not involved:
 - Walking Group Leader Award www.mltuk.org or
 - A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser

c) For leaders of walking groups in terrain 'easier' than that defined in b):

The leader must demonstrate an appropriate level of competence. This may include one or more of the following:

- Countryside Leader Award. See www.countrysideleaderaward.org;
- Sports Leaders UK Level 2 Award in Basic Expedition Leadership (BEL);
- Completion of a suitable 'Leader Training' Course;
- A written statement of competence by an appropriate technical adviser;
- Evidence of recent, relevant experience, appropriately corroborated;
- An assessment of competence (written or implied) by the Principal.

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5.5 Snowsports

A member of staff intending to organise a snowsport visit (but not instruct, lead or supervise on snow) must hold the Snowsport Course Organiser Award (SCO), administered by Snowsport England -www.snowsportengland.org.uk -and must have previously accompanied at least one educational snowsports visit.

Young people may only participate in snowsports when under the direction of an appropriately qualified and competent person. This would normally be an instructor employed by the local snowsports school.

A member of staff intending to lead skiing or snowboarding (i.e. not using a ski school instructor) must be qualified as follows:

Skiing: The minimum qualification to lead skiing on snow is:

- The Alpine Ski Course Leader Award (ASCL) www.snowsportengland.org.uk; or
- The Alpine Ski Leader Award (ASL) www.snowsportsotland.org; or
- A statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser'

These awards only qualify to lead NOT teach skiing.

Snowboarding: The minimum qualification to lead snowboarding on snow is:

The Snowboard Leader Award (SBL) administered by www.snowsportsotland.org or statement of competence by an appropriate 'technical adviser'.

Pupils may only take part in off-piste activities if under the direction of a suitably qualified local instructor, AND they will remain within the designated controlled areas, AND off-piste activities are specifically included within the visit insurance policy.

5.6 Overseas Expeditions

Overseas Expeditions are defined as those which typically involve journeying in remote areas of the world and/or in developing countries.

Overseas Expeditions will only be approved if the provider either:

- a) Holds an LOtC Quality Badge or
- b) Provides a statement of compliance with Guidance for Overseas Expeditions, Edition 3.

For providers that do not hold a LOtC Quality Badge, 'Guidance for Overseas Expeditions, Edition 3' should be referred to when the proposal is initiated. This document contains information for both establishments and providers and includes a checklist of vital aspects that must be considered prior to the establishment making a commitment with an external provider. Overseas expedition providers are required to comply with the minimum standards specified in this document.

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