

# HEALTH AND SAFETY on EDUCATIONAL VISITS POLICY

## DRY SANDFORD COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL



### Leading Lifelong Learning; Creating Caring Communities

#### Vision Statement

We believe that outdoor educational and offsite activities have a positive impact on raising standards, being a valuable and important part of the learning process.

#### Policy

All visits **must have** an identifiable **educational benefit** for the participants and must be led by a **competent Group leader** and **accompanying adults**. The EVC co-ordinator/Head will make a judgement about employee competency when visits have been proposed.

**All those** involved in the organisation and running of educational visits will comply with national, LA and school guidelines on the health and safety of participants on educational visits. Reference needs to be made to the National Guidance found at <http://oeapng.info/> and LA guidance at [www.oxfordshireoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.oxfordshireoutdoors.co.uk)

This guidance applies to most situations where staff acting in the course of their employment takes responsibility for children and young people taking part in offsite activities and visits, as well as when taking part in an on-site outdoor activity.

The common element to the above is 'being outdoors', either on-site or off-site or on the journey away to new environments, away from the usual indoor base. The following terms may all be used to capture this range of ventures, experiences and environments:

- Off-Site Visits**
- Outdoor Learning**
- Learning Outside the Classroom (LOtC) and**
- Educational Visits**

The Management of all visits will be based on the outcome of suitable and sufficient risk assessments and group leaders will ensure that such risk assessments are carried out as part of the planning process.

It is the responsibility of **all staff** to ensure that the risk to the health and safety of participants is minimised by a process of continuous vigilance and ongoing risk assessment.

#### Inclusion

The Equality Act 2010 replaced previous anti-discrimination Acts and regulations with one single Act. This Act uses different wording and some different concepts from those used previously but makes only a few changes to the substance of existing law. In particular, it can be safely assumed that decisions made by the Courts in cases decided under previous law will remain relevant.

The Equality Act states that the responsible body of a school must not discriminate, harass or victimise a pupil to whom one of the protected characteristics applies (Disability; Gender reassignment; Pregnancy and maternity; Race; Religion or belief; Sex and sexual

orientation) in the way that it affords (or not) the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service. There is a duty to make reasonable adjustments.

Every effort should be made to ensure that outdoor learning, off site visits and Learning Outside the Classroom activities are **available and accessible to all**, irrespective of special educational or medical needs, ethnic origin, gender, religion or any of the other protected characteristics. If a visit needs to cater for young people with special needs, every reasonable effort should be made to find a venue that is both suitable and accessible and that enables the whole group to **participate fully and be actively involved**.

Establishments should take all reasonably practicable measures to include all young people. The principles of inclusion should be promoted and addressed for all visits and reflected in establishment policy, thus ensuring an aspiration towards:

- an entitlement to participate
- accessibility through direct or realistic adaptation or modification
- integration through participation with peers

However, the Disability Discrimination Act Code of Practice for Schools (which has not yet been repealed) states (section 4.6 page 27) '*where a child has a behaviour difficulty for a reason other than a disability, for example arising from social or domestic circumstances, it is likely that such a difficulty is not covered by the legislation.*'

Any adjustments that are made in order to include a disabled young person, should not impinge unduly on the planned purpose of the activity. As an example, it may not be appropriate for a parent to accompany a child on a residential visit where the planned learning outcomes of the visit include "*developing independence*" and "*developing relationships*".

A decision to exclude a young person will never be taken lightly, and only after extensive consultation with all those who have responsibility for the young person, including the Head teacher/Manager, visit leader, class teacher, parents, any support staff, any third party provider, and possibly their GP.

It may be reasonable to exclude a young person where their behaviour presents a significant, unmanageable and unacceptable risk to the health, safety and welfare of either themselves, or other members of the group, or the leaders. When a young person is excluded on these grounds, you should consider providing alternative ways of achieving the same learning outcomes.

Where there is some doubt about including or excluding a young person on the grounds of their behaviour, the following points should be considered:

- identifying the issue at the earliest stage of planning.
- involving all interested parties.
- recording this process.
- establishing a behaviour management plan with agreed action points that may enable inclusion on the visit.
- establishing behaviour targets and timescales to be met to allow inclusion, or trigger a decision to exclude.
- providing an additional adult, such as a parent or support worker, with a specific brief to manage behaviour issues.
- ensuring that what is expected of staff is reasonable and within their competence

## **Safeguarding**

All school employees will have current DBS paperwork.

Dry Sandford School will give careful consideration to whether a voluntary helper may require a DBS. Voluntary helpers with frequent or intensive contact (as listed below) should be checked:

- those working with a group or groups of young people regularly
- those involved in accompanying residential visits
- those providing supervision of young people in sensitive areas such as swimming pool changing rooms

A DBS for a voluntary helper is not required for instance, with a parent helper on a one-off visit to a museum, where the visit is organised in such a way that they will always be working under the direct supervision of Teachers or Teaching Assistants - and never placed in a situation where grooming is reasonably foreseeable.

### **Practice**

- The co-ordinator (Head teacher) for this policy has attended an Educational Visits Co-ordinators' Training Course (completed Oct 12; renewal due Oct 15)
- The coordinator must ensure that educational visits follow National, LA and school guidelines and that the Group Leader and accompanying adults are suitably competent to run the visit.
- The coordinator must develop and implement an approval system for Category A (Normal risk) and B (Additional risk) visits, whilst notify Category C (High risk) visits (including all visits abroad) to the LA. Refer to <http://oeapng.info/> and LA guidance at [www.oxfordshireoutdoors.co.uk](http://www.oxfordshireoutdoors.co.uk)
- The SLT must develop and implement a procedure for dealing with emergency situations, including having a named home-base contact for each visit and a home based emergency plan.
- The SLT must develop and implement a procedure for the investigation of and reporting on accidents, incidents and near misses.
- The Visit Leader must ensure that signed consent forms are collected before the visit takes place.
- Dry Sandford School may obtain block consent from parents for routine, normal risk visits at the start of each academic year/term.
- A Group Leader will be nominated to lead each educational visit.

### **During the planning of a visit the Group Leader will**

- Ensure that the visit is planned and risk assessed, including an exploratory visit whenever it is possible. Risk Assessment form RA1 should be completed and approved by the Educational Visits Co-ordinator before planning or the trip is at an advanced stage.
- Ensure that the visit complies with National, LA and own establishment guidelines.
- Ensure that parents/guardians are made fully aware of the nature, purpose and detail of a visit and that permission including all relevant information is obtained for any off site activity.
- Ensure that appropriate enquiries are made of any establishment or company being used for residential or outdoor adventurous activities.
- Ensure that provision is made for any incident, including first aid and a procedure to follow in the event of an emergency or other serious incident.
- Ensure that all necessary forms are completed for an educational visit and the appropriate consents and approvals are obtained.

- Ensure that all accompanying adults are selected on the basis of their competence and suitability to undertake the tasks they are allocated and ensure those adults understand their role.

**During a visit the Group Leader will:-**

- Ensure that the visit is as safe as practicable.
- Curtail the visit or stop the activity if the risk to the health and safety of any participant reaches an unacceptable level.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the need to be involved in the process of ongoing risk assessment, including the reporting of hazards and potential risks.
- Retain ultimate responsibility for participants at all times.

**During a visit accompanying adults will:-**

- Ensure they undertake the roles and tasks given to them so as not to put themselves or others at unacceptable risk.

**During a visit all participants will:-**

- Ensure they cooperate with the Group Leader and follow the instructions given to them in order to maintain the lowest acceptable risks to the health and safety of all participants.

**After the visit the Group Leader will:-**

- Ensure that the visit is reviewed.
- Ensure that pertinent information acquired from or about the visit or activity is drawn to the attention of the EVC and shared with colleagues for consideration in the planning of future educational visits and activities.

**Charges for visits:**

Refer to **Dry Sandford School's Charging Policy**

The restrictions on charging do not prohibit the school's governing body from seeking voluntary contributions in support of an activity. Such contributions must, however, be genuinely voluntary. Consequently, it must be made clear to parents that there is no obligation to contribute, and students must not be treated differently according to whether or not their parents have made any contribution.

It is important to provide written information to those in a position of parental authority. This should explain the nature of the proposed venture, the likely value in educational terms and the financial contribution per student which would be required if the activity were to take place. The information should emphasise that there is no obligation to contribute and that no student will be excluded because parents are unwilling or unable to contribute. **However, it must be made equally clear whether the venture is likely to be cancelled if there are insufficient contributions.**

There is **no limit** to the level of voluntary contribution, nor is there any restriction on the way in which such contributions may be used. Thus voluntary contributions may be used to subsidise students of lesser means and to pay the travel and accommodation costs of accompanying teachers. (National Guidance April 2012)

Policy Reviewed: **January 2024**

EVC (Educational Visits Coordinator): **Katie Friday**

Review Date: **January 2026**

## Visit or Activity Leader

See also: Visit Leader Check List

The Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 places overall responsibility for health and safety with the employer. However, employees are required to take reasonable care and to cooperate with their employer. It is critical that employees understand “who is my employer” (Refer to “Basic Essentials MUST read – Remit and Rationale”) and understand their employer’s policy and guidance.

The Visit Leader has the overall responsibility for supervision and conduct of the visit. To ensure accountability and to avoid potential confusion, a **single Visit Leader** should be appointed. If this role changes during a visit, a clear handover should be made.

The key requirements for Visit Leaders are that they must be accountable, and competent and confident to lead the visit/activity, not that they hold a particular post, title or job description.

Being **accountable** means that the Leader has been engaged through an appropriate recruitment process, which includes vetting and induction into the establishment’s policies and procedures. The details of this process may depend upon whether the Leader is employed, contracted or acts as a volunteer, but in all cases should be thorough.

Being **competent** means that the Leader has demonstrated the ability to operate to recognised standards of good practice, and has sufficient relevant experience and knowledge of the group, the activity and the venue. There are several ways of demonstrating competence. These include:

- Providing evidence of holding relevant qualifications, including any specific qualification required by the law, the employer or the establishment (e.g. in First Aid).
- Providing evidence of having undertaken appropriate training. Visit Leaders and their deputies are strongly recommended to undertake any Visit Leader training provided by their employer, and should be aware that some employers make this a requirement.
- Providing verified evidence of relevant experience. Where a Leader wishes to lead an adventure activity, their competence should be confirmed by a robust verification process, such as:
  - Holding a National Governing Body leadership/coaching award at an appropriate level.
  - Being "signed off" by a suitably-qualified Technical Adviser appointed by the employer.

Being **confident** means, not only being fully aware of their abilities, but also of their limitations. If you are designated as the Visit Leader, you should:

- Liaise with your establishment’s Educational Visits Co-ordinator (EVC) and ensure that your respective roles are clear.
- Be formally approved to carry out the visit.
- Be specifically competent.
- Plan and prepare for the visit, taking a lead on risk management. It is good practice to involve all staff in the planning and risk management process to ensure wider understanding. It is also good practice to involve young people in these processes wherever appropriate.
- Define the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, appointing a deputy wherever possible.

- If the staff team includes someone with a close relationship to a member of the group, ensure there are adequate safeguards so that this will not compromise group management.
- Ensure that child protection issues are addressed (e.g. vetting including DBS checks).
- Provide relevant information to supporting staff, including about the nature and location of the visit and about the participants (including age, health information, capabilities, special needs, safeguarding and behavioural issues)
- Ensure that informed parental consent has been obtained as necessary.
- Provide relevant information to parents and young people, and arrange previsit information meetings where appropriate.
- Make sure there is access to first aid at an appropriate level.
- Ensure the activity/visit is effectively supervised.
- Ensure that all staff and any third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details.
- Evaluate all aspects of the visit, both during and after the event.
- Report any accidents, incidents or near-misses.

When working with third-party activity providers it is imperative to avoid 'grey areas', so there should be a clear handover before and after any activity led by a provider. Should a provider run an activity in a way that causes concern, the accompanying staff should consider stopping the activity at the first appropriate moment. Such an intervention should be done with sensitivity and discretion to ensure that it does not result in young people being put at greater risk.

## Dry Sandford School's Guidance

### Visit Leader Check List

This document is useful for all visit and activity leaders and should be attached to the RA1 form.

	Y/N
I have met all requirements of my employer's and my establishment's policies relevant to the visit.	
I am confident to lead the visit and have the specific competence to do so, and have been judged so by my head / manager in line with my employer's requirements.	
I have planned and prepared for the visit, involving staff and young people in the planning and risk management process to ensure wider understanding.	
I have kept my EVC informed at each stage of the planning process.	
I have undertaken a preliminary visit if appropriate or required by establishment policy.	
I have defined the roles and responsibilities of other staff (and young people) to ensure effective supervision, and have appointed a deputy.	
I have shared details of 24/7 emergency contacts and emergency arrangements with key staff.	
I have obtained parental consent forms (where required), medical details and contact details and these have been copied and shared with relevant staff and providers.	
I have checked whether insurance arrangements are adequate.	
If accompanying leaders take a family member on a visit, there are adequate safeguards to ensure that this will not compromise group management.	
Child protection issues are addressed, including DBS/ ISA checks and processes where appropriate.	
I have disseminated relevant information to supporting staff.	
There is access to first aid at an appropriate level.	
Relevant information has been provided to parents and young people, and pre-visit information meetings have been arranged where appropriate.	
All aspects of the visit (both during and after the event) are evaluated.	
Staff and other supervisors have been appropriately briefed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the nature of the group, including age, health characteristics, capabilities, special educational needs, likely behaviour and any other information relevant to the planned activities.</li> <li>- the nature and location of the visit.</li> </ul>	
The visit is effectively supervised - staffing ratios meet requirements of good practice	
I understand that the overarching duty of care remains with establishment leaders, even when partial responsibility is shared with a provider.	
Staff and third party providers have access to emergency contact and emergency procedure details.	

## Group Management and Supervision

The Visit Leader/Activity Leader retains a "duty of care" for the group at all times. In delegating supervisory roles to other adults, **it is good practice for the Visit Leader to:**

- allocate supervisory responsibility to each adult for named young people
- arrange the party into smaller and more easily managed sub-groups.
- ensure that each adult knows which sub group and which young people they are responsible for
- ensure that each young person knows which adult is responsible for them
- ensure that all adults understand that they are responsible to the Visit Leader for the supervision of the young people assigned to them
- ensure that all adults and young people are aware of the expected standards of behaviour

It is good practice for each **Assistant Leader** to:

- have a reasonable prior knowledge of the young people, including any special educational needs, medical needs or disabilities
- carry a list/register of all group members
- directly supervise the young people (except during remote supervision) - particularly important when they are mingling with the public and may not be easily identified
- regularly check that the entire group is present
- have a clear idea of the activity to be undertaken, including its aims, objectives and targeted learning outcomes
- have the means to contact the Visit Leader/other adult supervisors if needing help
- have prior knowledge of the venue from the Visit Leader (see the document "Preliminary Visits and Provider Assurances" in this guidance)
- recognise unforeseen hazards and respond accordingly
- monitor the activity, including the physical and mental condition and abilities of the group members and the suitability of the prevailing conditions.
- be competent in the techniques of group management
- ensure that young people abide by the agreed standards of behaviour
- clearly understand the emergency procedures and be able to carry them out
- know how to access First Aid

Each **young person** should:

- know who their supervisor is at any given time and how to contact him or her
- make sure that they have understood instructions



- make sure they are not isolated from the group
- know who their fellow sub-group members are
- alert the supervisor if someone is missing or in difficulties
- make sure they are aware of any designated meeting place
- make sure they understand the action they should take if they become lost or separated
- understand and accept the expected standards of behaviour

### Head counts

Regular head counts of young people should take place throughout all off-site activities. The frequency will need to be increased at certain points such as crowded public areas, getting on and off transport, in poor visibility or adverse weather conditions. It is easier to monitor and count smaller groups and clusters.

It is good practice to:

- double-check numbers before departing from a venue
- carry a list/register of all young people and adults involved in the visit at all times
- ensure that younger children are readily identifiable, especially if the visit is to a densely populated area. e.g. brightly coloured caps, T-shirts or a school uniform can help identify group members more easily
- avoid identification that could put young people at risk e.g. name badges
- provide extra safeguards for very young children, or for those with special needs, such as providing laminated cards displaying the name of the group or hotel and an emergency contact number. This would be appropriate for all visits abroad with a translation of the information into the language of the country being visited
- ensure that all young people are aware of rendezvous points
- ensure that all young people know what to do if they become separated from the group
- make the staff and young people aware of their destination e.g. the tube station where the plan requires them to get off

### 'Buddy' systems

A situation where one group member becomes lost or isolated from their allotted group should be avoided at all costs. The "bottom line" of sub-grouping should therefore be a buddy system with the smallest unit of not less than three, backed by clear instructions not to separate unless there is a need for help.

### Rearranging Groups

Young people can become detached when groups are rearranged. For example:

- when a large group is split into smaller groups for specific activities
- when groups transfer from one activity to another and change supervisor
- during periods between activities

- when small groups re-form into a large group.

It is therefore crucial that each **supervisor**:

- makes it clear at which point they are taking on leadership responsibility for the group they are allocated and when their part of the programme begins.
- ensures that all group members are aware of the changeover.
- clearly passes on responsibility for the group when their part of the programme is concluded, together with any relevant information

## Down Time

Down time, or recreation time, is that period before, between or after more structured activities. Visit leaders should ensure that pupils continue to be appropriately supervised during downtime and such supervision could be direct or remote.

It is good practice to:

- avoid using the term 'free time'
- ensure that all staff and young people understand the standards of behaviour that apply at all times, not just during activities
- ensure that a staff duty system operates so that groups continue to be appropriately supervised at all times
- have strict guidelines for behaviour in bedrooms and dormitories

However, time with their peers, away from direct adult supervision, is an important feature, particularly of residential visits, and brings many additional learning opportunities for young people. Too much unstructured time can allow opportunities for mischief, bullying, homesickness and wandering off, so the time should be appropriately managed. Opportunities for 'down' time should be built into the visit plan, included in information to parents (and their consent) and be covered by the risk-benefit assessment.

Standard techniques for remote supervision in this context could include:

- setting geographical boundaries within a suitable area
- setting a time limit by which all are to be back at an agreed location
- ensuring young people are in small 'buddy' groups and know to stay together
- briefing students as to the location of staff during the 'down time' period: some staff could be in a fixed position and others roaming the agreed area
- if students get lost, they know not to wander aimlessly but to stay together and wait for the staff to find them
- if abroad ensuring students carry a small briefing card in the local language

ensuring students know the location of the hotel or hostel they are staying at (carrying a hotel card from reception is a simple and effective idea)

Clearly the age, maturity and competence of the students will affect how you put this into practice.

## Night Time Supervision

Leaders should ensure that:

- the group's immediate accommodation is exclusively for the group's use.
- leaders have sleeping accommodation providing easy access to their group.
- accommodation arrangements do not compromise child protection.
- in the absence of 24 hour staffing of reception, buildings can be made secure against intrusion.
- internal doors meet fire regulation requirements and allow staff access to the young peoples' accommodation at all times.
- where young people's doors can be locked, leaders must have access to a master key.
- in the event of a fire, all staff and young people know the emergency procedures and escape routes.

## Group Supervision when travelling

The level of effective supervision necessary for the journey should be considered as part of the overall risk management plan. Please refer to the Transport documents in the National Guidance for general advice about transport and specific advice about minibuses and private cars.