

Outdoor Education and Educational Visits Policy



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Introduction

Off-site visits are activities which take place outside school grounds and are arranged by our school. Staff (including governors) believe that off-site activities can supplement and enrich the curriculum by providing experiences. All off-site activities must serve an educational purpose, enhancing and enriching our pupil's learning experiences. In this policy we seek to establish a clear and coherent structure for the planning and evaluation of our off-site visits. It also sets out to ensure that any risks are managed and kept to acceptable levels for the health and safety of pupils, staff and volunteers at all times. Within these limits we seek to make our visits available to all pupils, and especially accessible to those with protective characteristics. All visits are governed by the requirements outlined in the DfE's *Health and Safety at work Act 1974 & Adventure Activities Licensing Scheme*. Further advice will be sought where necessary. Copies of these guidance documents are available on the national guidance web site or from the Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC). All staff leading or participating in a visit are required to have read this Policy and to have signed it to say this is the case.

Whale Hill will comply with National Curriculum Guidance, DfE and other appropriate external body guidelines as published in the following documents.

-  <http://oeapng.info/> - National Guidance Website
-  Health and Safety of Students on Educational Visits (HASLOC) DfE/HSPV2, September 1998
-  Standards for LEAs in Overseeing Educational Visits DfE/0564/2002, July 2002 Standards for Adventure DfE/0565/2002, July 2002
-  A Handbook for Group Leaders DfE/0566/2002, July 2002
-  Group Safety at Water Margins DfE/CCPR/2002, Dec. 2002
-  Learning outside the classroom manifesto DfE 2006
-  Guidance on the Adventurous Activities Licensing Regulations HSE 2004
-  Safe Practice In Physical Education and School Sports AFPE 2012
-  Health and safety on educational visits DfE November 2018
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits/health-and-safety-on-educational-visits>
-  Updated Department for Education (DfE) guidance (2023) on safeguarding and duty of care during off-site activities, including digital consent and communication systems.

They provide a wealth of information for conducting visits and are the source of information embedded into this policy.

The aims of our off-site visits are to:

1. Enhance curricular and recreational opportunities for our pupils;
2. Provide a wider range of experiences for our pupils than could be provided on the school site alone;
3. Promote the independence of our pupils as learners, and enable them to grow and develop in new learning environments.
4. To enable our pupils to progress in skills and knowledge of the curriculum and of life skills.

Curriculum links

For each subject in the curriculum, we take advantage of many opportunities for off-site visits. These are constantly under review and may change from year-to-year.

Other events are planned throughout the year, including a range of sporting events and STEM/enterprise events.

Residential activities

Throughout their education, pupils may benefit from the opportunity to take part in a residential visit. Activities within school time are often linked to the National Curriculum or programmes of study. These residential visits enable pupils to take part in activities to build life skills, confidence and experience away from their normal environment. We provide qualified instructors for all specialist activities that we undertake.

Planning and Approving Visits

Whale Hill Primary has a named Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) who, along with the school Administration Assistant, is involved in the planning of educational visits. The Deputy Head Teacher, Assistant Head Teacher, Admin Assistant and Secretary are all trained in Educational Visits through Simon Willis (Outdoor Learning and Educational Visits Advisor, North Yorkshire County Council).

The Educational Visits Coordinator and Administration Assistant will:

-  Ensure that risk assessments are completed by competent trained staff;
-  Check visit plans and sign-off risk assessments;
-  Ensure that risk assessments for frequent/regular visits are routinely reviewed (for example a swimming facility) and update where necessary.
-  Assign competent staff to lead and help with trips (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);
-  Ensure that regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays have had satisfactory DBS checks carried out. Volunteers used for one off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The Head teacher's discretion under these circumstances is used;
-  Check that Visit Leaders are competent and record details of necessary training and qualifications and/or reviewing verified evidence of relevant experience;
-  Verify that all private car drivers, have had satisfactory DBS checks, and that the letter from the coach company assures us their drivers too have had satisfactory DBS checks;
-  Make sure that all necessary consent and medical forms are obtained;
-  Pass all visits to the head teacher for formal approval
-  Ensure that all visits are recorded in the same way;

The head teacher will:

-  Appoint/approve a competent Visit Leader to be responsible for running the visit. This will normally be a teacher with an appropriate level of experience, training and qualifications.
-  Have responsibility for the sanctioning and authorisation of visits and ensuring that visits fulfil school criteria

The group leader will:

-  Ensure all off-site activities take place in accordance with school procedures;

-  Check to ensure sufficient staff and helpers of the right experience are DBS checked (as detailed above) and briefed throughout the visit; conduct/review risk assessments and ensure management to reduce risks including site specific, general and dynamic risk assessments are undertaken and recorded;
-  Ensure a named person, emergency procedures and systems for recording and sharing information on accidents and near misses are in place before briefing pupils and parents;
-  Where appropriate and when considered necessary undertake exploratory visits or seek references from other schools if using new venues; and reassess from time to time;
-  Ensure that the details of the visit and risk assessments are passed on to the EVC with standard forms attached where appropriate to show the arrangements that have been made;
-  Facilitate continuous and ongoing dynamic risk assessments for the duration of the visit and be prepared to initiate Plan B or stop the visit or activity if appropriate and return to school
-  Ensure any accidents / incidents are reported;
-  Feedback any learning points from visits to the EVC/head teacher
-  Ensure all documentation including the risk assessments and indemnity forms are completed/reviewed within the specified time to ensure EVC are able to comply with Trust policies.
-  Visit Leaders must ensure contingency planning includes arrangements for extreme weather events (e.g. heatwaves, flooding, poor air quality) and other environmental factors that may impact safety.
-  Digital systems such as Evolve will be used to maintain auditable records of risk assessments, consent, and emergency contacts.
-  Ensure that Best Value principles are used when selecting providers, appropriate checks are made, insurance and financial support procedures are followed;
-  Ensure appropriate transport arrangements are in place i.e. reputable coach company, driver insurance, following specific legal requirements;

Where staff are proposing to arrange an off-site activity, they must first seek and obtain the initial approval of the head teacher before any commitment is made. Staff should discuss the basic details with the EVC and when initial approval is granted, paperwork should be completed for submission to the EVC and head teacher. Governors will be informed of all visits through the termly head teacher report and delegate formal approval of visits to the head teacher.

It is school policy that all pupils including those with medical conditions should be able to participate in educational visits. Where a child with a protected characteristic is eligible for a trip, we will make every effort to ensure that s/he is included. We may seek guidance from parents to help us adapt our programme, and we will make any reasonable adjustments to our itinerary to include a child with protective characteristics. Any such adjustments will be included in the risk assessment.

Risk assessments

The Visit Leader must carry out a comprehensive risk assessment, before the proposed visit which must be read and signed by all accompanying staff prior to the visit. It will assess the risks that might be encountered on the visit, and will indicate measures to prevent or reduce them. All identified hazards must be reduced to an acceptable level (Medium or Low rating) before the head teacher will approve the visit.

The risk assessment should be based on the following considerations:

-  Look for the hazards;
-  Decide who might be harmed and how;
-  Evaluate the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done;

- 🔊 Implement safety measures needed to reduce risks to an acceptable level;
- 🔊 Include the SEN/medical needs of the specific pupils participating;
- 🔊 Plan for emergencies;
- 🔊 Identify alternative arrangements or “Plan B” if the risks change and activities cannot be completed;
- 🔊 Record findings;
- 🔊 Review assessment and revise it if necessary.
- 🔊 Risk assessments must also consider online safety risks where technology is used during visits (e.g. tablets for learning, pupils’ personal devices during residential).
- 🔊 Special attention should be given to pupils with SEND or medical conditions, ensuring that Individual Healthcare Plans are fully integrated into visit planning.

Where necessary, and if possible, staff planning an off-site visit should make a preliminary visit to the venue in order to carry out an on-site risk assessment. Some venues will have their own risk assessments and these should be sought prior to the visit taking place. These assessments should be considered to ascertain if they are of an appropriate standard and can be adopted.

It is important to assess and record any health, safety or security issues that are identified during the preliminary visit. Any such issues will be taken into account when the final decision is taken on whether the visit should proceed, and the risk assessment must show the extent of any hazards involved, and the measures that will be taken to reduce or eliminate the risks. The cost of these preliminary visits will be borne by the school, and should be built into the overall financial arrangements for the visit itself.

Activity and Group Leaders must ensure that children are adequately supervised and take into account the following:

- 🔊 The nature of the activity (including its duration);
- 🔊 The location and environment in which the activity is to take place;
- 🔊 The age and gender (including developmental age) of the young people to be supervised;
- 🔊 The ability of the young people (including their behavioural, medical, emotional and educational needs);
- 🔊 Medical conditions and Individual Healthcare Plans
- 🔊 Staff competence.

This means that arrangements for supervision, including staff/pupil ratios, must take into account the nature of a group and its individuals. It is therefore important that, when planning a repeat visit or a series of activities, the previous plan (no matter how well it worked in the past) is reviewed to ensure it meets current group needs.

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/pupil ratios for a particular age group or activity. However, some guidance documents do set out ratios, but these should be regarded as starting points for consideration rather than being definitive as they may only be appropriate where the activity is relatively straightforward and the group has no special requirements. For example, the DfES publication Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits (1998) suggested the following ‘starting points’:

Nursery	1:3
Reception	1:5
School years 1 – 3	1:6
School years 4 - 6	1:15 (non-residential) 1 : 10 (residential)

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework no longer sets out different requirements for minimum ratios during outings from those required on site. As with other age groups, ratios during outings should be determined by risk assessment, which should be reviewed before each outing. The appropriate ratio on an outing is always likely to be lower than the legal minimum that applies. Staff to child ratios for Foundation Stage can be found in Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Normally at least two adults will accompany any off-site visit. The Group Leader will usually be a teacher but this is not compulsory and the other may be a responsible and competent adult.

These ratios are minimum requirements, and may not provide adequate supervision in all cases. Higher levels of supervision may be required or determined by the risk assessment.

A risk assessment must also cover transport to and from the venue and must include provision for:

-  appropriate level of supervision;
-  the required use of child restraints;
-  vetting of the driver by the police;
-  insurance for the driver;
-  details of first aid and emergency procedures;
-  breakdown procedures.

The group leader will double-check with the head teacher through our safeguarding procedures that all regular volunteers and those assisting with overnight/residential stays on the trip have been subject to satisfactory DBS checks. Those volunteers used for one-off activities, who are not left alone at any time (out of sight/ear shot of a member of staff) to supervise pupils, do not necessarily need DBS checks completing. The head teacher's discretion under these circumstances will be used.

Where a volunteer is a parent (or otherwise in a close relationship to a young person taking part in the visit) they will not be assigned as a volunteer that gives them direct responsibility for their own child.

A copy of the completed risk assessments which are completed and given to the head teacher, Educational Visits Coordinator and all adults supervising the trip and will be available to parents and governors.

It is important that the risk assessments are communicated and understood by everyone involved in the trip (staff, volunteers, pupils and parents) before it takes place. This includes risks, control measures, emergency arrangements and contingency plans.

Dynamic risk assessments will be required during the visit if changes occur e.g. weather, illness or an unforeseen hazard. These involve professional judgements in response to changing circumstances. It is critical that control measures are monitored and confirmed or adapted as required.

On completion of the visit, the risk assessment must be reviewed and any learning points and recommendations for improved control measures documented and communicated to relevant staff.

Any accidents that occur to employees, volunteers or pupils during the visit must be investigated and recorded following normal accident reporting procedures. RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents will require Redcar and Cleveland's Health and Safety Advisor (Joe Moutter – 01642 444646) to be notified as soon as reasonably practicable.

Individual/group risk assessments should also be carried out for vulnerable pupils e.g pupils with ADHD, asthma (group risk assessment), pupils with hearing impairment (individual risk assessment).

Transport

When hiring coaches and minibuses, it is our policy only to use reputable companies with vehicles fitted with appropriate seatbelts and to insist that all those participating in the visit wear them. **No member of staff will be allowed to be alone with a child in a car.** Where private cars are used for transport, the head teacher is responsible for ensuring:

-  suitability of driver
-  parents' written agreement

-  appropriate licence, insurance, roadworthiness and child restraints for vehicle; that each driver has been subject to DBS checks.
-  appropriate car seats are in use

Transport arrangements will allow a seat for each member of the party and appropriate child restraints will be used, whether travelling by car, minibus or coach.

Costing

The costing of off-site activities should include any of the following that apply:

-  transport;
-  entrance fees;
-  insurance;
-  provision of any special resources or equipment;
-  costs related to adult helpers;
-  food and refreshments
-  accommodation
-  external providers.

Whale Hill follows all legal requirements about charging for visits. Parents will be asked for a voluntary contribution towards the cost of the trip. If the visit is not viable for financial reasons, it will not run and any money collected will be repaid.

Communication with Parents/Carers

The parents/carers of pupils taking part in an off-site activity will be provided with all appropriate information about the intended visit through ParentMail to make an informed decision:

-  Times/ dates
-  Costs
-  Venues
-  Dress Code
-  Mode of transport
-  Meal arrangements
-  Contact details

Parents/carers must give their written permission, medical and contact details, before a child can be involved in any off-site educational visits. Parents should provide up-to-date contact and medical information for every visit. Verbal consent may be given if written consent is not forthcoming.

Funding for off-site activities is provided mainly by parental contributions. This must be made clear to parents in all correspondence about an educational visit at the planning stage. Further detail can be found in the School Charging and Remissions Policy.

No child may be excluded from a visit taking place in school time because of the unwillingness or inability of the parent to make a contribution. Parents will be informed of this principle via letters sent home about intended visits. The timetable for the payment of contributions should allow for the head teacher to make a decision about the financial viability of the activity in reasonable time. Where appropriate for residential, foreign or activity visits, information meetings with parents will be arranged. Expectations of behaviour and codes of conduct will be explained to parents. This will include the need to meet the cost and make arrangements for collecting pupils in certain circumstances.

Communication with Pupils

Pupils should be briefed about aims, expectations and codes of conduct for all visits. Training and careful briefing on activities will be given, particularly for unfamiliar ones. Ongoing briefings are an important part of learning and safety and will always be provided whilst on the visit. Where possible, pupils should be involved with planning, developing codes of conduct, assessing/managing risk and evaluating their own attitude, behaviour, development and learning.

Further health and safety considerations

All adults accompanying a party must be made aware, by the group leader, of the emergency procedures that will apply. Each adult should be provided with an emergency telephone number. This will normally be the school office number, but where an activity extends beyond the normal working day the home telephone number/mobile telephone number of a designated emergency contact should be provided.

Before a group embarks on the visit, the head teacher and emergency contact should have access to a list of everyone, pupils and adults, travelling with the group, together with the emergency contact information for every individual, programme and timetable for the activity.

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

Prior to a visit, if it is felt that the behaviour of an individual child is likely to compromise the safety of others or the good name of the school/trust, the group leader should discuss with the head teacher the possibility of excluding that child from the activity.

Pupils whose medical/health complaints cause particular concern will be referred to their clinician, including their GP for appropriate guidance and advice. Every reasonable effort will be made to achieve inclusion for those pupils with medical/health complaints, subject to overall safety requirements.

In the majority of cases, it is not appropriate for trip leaders and supervising employees to have an alcoholic drink during an educational visit. There are occasions, however, when it may be acceptable for employees to have an alcoholic drink when on a residential visit, for example during a meal. However, this must be judged carefully as all employees on a trip are expected to be able to provide an enhanced duty of care at all times, particularly during an emergency when clear thinking and the ability to manage high levels of stress are required. Therefore, while reasonable consumption of alcohol may be permitted, no member of staff should be *under the influence* of alcohol. At least one employee, and possibly more depending upon the situation, must not consume any alcohol at any one time during an educational visit.

Staff must be aware of their responsibilities under the Prevent duty when supervising visits, remaining vigilant for safeguarding concerns in external environments.

Where pupils have the opportunity to visit a gift/souvenir shop, pupils should usually not bring more than £5 to spend. On no occasion should pupils purchase chewing gum or hard/boiled sweets as they are a choking hazard.

Visit documentation

The documentation for educational visits must include the following where applicable to the visit. Paper copies should be taken on the visit by the group leader including:

-  risk assessments;
-  general information (maps, itinerary etc);
-  names, contact details, consent and medical details, and other relevant details of all those going on the visit;
-  Individual Healthcare Plans;
-  accommodation plan, where relevant;
-  contingency plan details;
-  intended arrangements for supervision;
-  contacts details (including out of hours) for the emergency contact, safeguarding lead and head of school;
-  first-aid arrangements;
-  accident report forms.
-  Contact details for nearest A&E, walk-in centre and pharmacy

Categorisation of visits

Category	Types of visit	Consent and fully informing parents	Record keeping, notification and approval
A	Routine visits and activities which are a normal part of educational provision including but not limited to; -Local walks which present no significant risks or technical requirements -Swimming lessons as part of national curriculum provision -Local sports fixtures -Bike ability/cycle training	-On enrolment at the establishment giving details of the types of visits included in this consent and the activities involved. -Medical details from establishment records -Fully informed by whatever means is appropriate to the establishment	-Auditable records kept at the establishment -Notified to the council as a termly record of visits -Approval by Educational Visits Co-ordinator or Head of Establishment according to local policy
B	Non-routine visits which are usually less complex; -Sports fixtures beyond the local area -Day visits beyond the vicinity of the establishment involving longer journeys -Visits and activities falling outside the normal hours of the establishment -Non-routine visits or activities which are not part of normal educational provision -Adventurous activities led by an external provider holding an AALA licence	-On each occasion (or series of visits or activities) -Medical details from establishment records OR medical consent form according to the level of hazard -Fully informed on each occasion or series	-Auditable records kept at the establishment -Notified to the council as a termly record of visits -Visit may optionally be notified to the Council in advance -Approval by Educational Visits Co-ordinator or Head of Establishment according to local policy

	-Overnight visits (including camping) on the establishment site		
C	Complex visits including but not limited to; -Overnight visits (including camping) away from the establishment site -Visits abroad -Visits in open water or on the sea -Self-led adventurous activities -Adventurous activities led by a provider outside the scope of an AALA licence -High-ropes courses -Motor sports/driving off-road -Flying on any kind of aircraft -Visits near cliffs or steep terrain	-Individual consent and medical information for each visit or activity or series of visits or activities -Fully informed consent prior to each visit or series.	-Auditable records kept at the establishment -Visit notified to the Council in advance -Approval by Educational Visits Co-ordinator or Head of Establishment according to local policy -Approval by the Council

Evolve https://evolve.edufocus.co.uk/evco10/evchome_public.asp?domain=visits.northyorks.gov.uk

is used to record all the details of visits, including:

Termly Records

Application for Approval of an Adventurous Visit or Adventurous Activity

Medical Information and Consent Form for Educational Visits and Adventurous Activities.

External Provider Statement for Educational Off – site Visits and Activities

Transport Arrangements

Risk assessments are also completed electronically through Evolve, but hard copies are distributed to relevant staff.



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and
Educational Visits Policy*